



WRITTEN REPORT



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Executive Summary

This study attempts to set up the hospitality company Marriott International, which is a dominant part of the international market, and more detailedly its organizational structure, corporate culture, strategic direction, and recent change initiatives.

1 With pertinent management theories as well as real-world data, the report evaluates both the performance of Marriott as a corporate entity and, separately, the performance of the individual hotel chains. The Marriott hybrid organizational structure, consisting of functional, divisional, and matrix parts, allows the group to manage control centrally and simultaneously allow adaptation to be conducted according to the regions, so it can develop globally. 2 “The Marriott Way” is the company’s key culture and the main thing it promotes is employees’ involvement fostering both employee and customer satisfaction through emphasizing values and diversity. 3 Recent ventures like the amalgamation of Starwood Hotels & Resorts and the reliance on digital technology have been the key drivers of Marriott’s rise in the market as well as its improvement in the area of quality or production. 4 In the whole strategic planning process of Marriott, it is to be noted that their main attention is to the world markets and the areas where they may take advantage of opportunities, it is about brand diversification and digital innovation that leads them to sustainability. The paper concludes with suggestions on how Marriott can stand out more from the competition, for example, to involve digital interlinking further, to make better its sustainability program, and to increase employee involvement. Marriott is poised to be a headliner for the coming years as they continue to grow and adapt.

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1. Introduction

Marriott International is an international hospitality behemoth, a company with roots that date back to 1927 typified by consistent growth and diversification by brand. This report will attempt to undertake a comprehensive analysis of Marriott International, critically examining the firm's corporate and individual hotel level operations. As one of the world's largest hotel groups, Marriott's strategic decisions and operational strategies have significant implications for the hospitality sector. To understand Marriott's strategic position, the theory of strategic management, as presented by Porter (1980), will be used. This theory emphasizes the role that the firm's resources play within the market opportunities. This analysis will look to examine the organisation's culture, structure, and overarching strategy, gaining an insight into the foundations upon which the firm's success is built. Alongside this, the impact that recent initiatives to transform the firm have had will be examined, such as the acquisition of Starwood and the utilisation of cutting-edge digital technology. The efficacy and management of these initiatives will be questioned. To gain an understanding of the cultural implications that these changes will have, the theory of Schein (2010) on organisational culture will be employed. The strategic direction that Marriott has pursued, such as its global expansion and brand diversification strategies, will be examined. Using appropriate management and organisational behaviour theory, this report will attempt to provide an evidence-based analysis that ultimately provides recommendations to further consolidate Marriott's position within the competitive hotel and hospitality sector.

2. Organisation Structure, Culture, and Objectives

2.1. Organisational Structure

Marriott International's organizational design is the product of its international brand portfolio and large size. It is a hybrid organization with complex nature that blends functional, divisional, and matrix structures to balance the control that comes from being centralized with the flexibility that comes from being local (Daft, 2016).

Functional divisions like finance, marketing, and human resources are placed within the corporate level to offer strategic guidance and support to ensure unity and coordination with the large firm goals. The centralized management provides the capacity to effectively manage the core functions and the use of standard policy throughout the firm. Operational execution is highly decentralized through divisional structures by region and brand.

This enables responsiveness to the various market realities on the ground, essential to the hospitality sector where consumer demands and regulatory frameworks are highly diverse. For example, Marriott's Asia Pacific division has a high degree of autonomy, developing strategies to address the region's specific needs. Divisional organization provides for responsiveness and flexibility, allowing Marriott to take advantage locally but avoid possible threats. Matrix organization is experienced through cross-functional project teams, especially for such endeavours like technology integration and sustainability. It provides the means to distribute information and resources between various departments and regions to guarantee cooperation and innovation. For example, an implementation project for a new system for guest technology can be composed of members from IT, marketing, and operations from different regions. This integrated strategy ensures that different perspectives are taken into account, and that the final product is to the advantage of all. Marriott's 2023 Annual Report highlighting information on more than 8,700 properties in 139 countries underscores the necessity for this strong and flexible system (Marriott International, 2023a. 2023 Annual Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.marriott.com/investor-relations/annual-reports.mi>). The successful integration of Starwood Hotels & Resorts was testimony to the advantage of careful system coordination within this complex system.

This acquisition was strategically executed to allow for smooth transition to avoid disrupting the two companies' synergy. The hybrid strategy gives Marriott the ability to preserve the brand experience but with regional differentiation to allow the customer to be retained and brand equity to be preserved within a competitive market.

2.2. Corporate Culture The corporate culture of the Marriott's "Marriott Way" is the core of its operations philosophy based on the focus on core values like people first, pursued excellence, change embraced, integrity acted, and serving the world. The culture is supplemented by extensive training programs for the staff, strong reward mechanisms, and leadership programs.

Diversity and inclusivity are the foundations upon which Marriott stands based on its Diversity and Inclusion Report that establishes the majority of the programs to ensure that the workplace is inclusive (Marriott International, 2023b. Diversity and Inclusion Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.marriott.com/diversity/diversity-inclusion.mi>). The programs are intended to ensure that every worker feels included and welcome regardless of the background. This enhances the staff's morale but also that of the firm's reputation as an employer. The firm's "Spirit to Serve" philosophy accommodates volunteering and community service to ensure that the staff feels the sense of contribution and belongingness. This social responsibility commitment not only advantages the societies where Marriott carries out its operations but also the staff's motivation and the firm's brand reputation.

Industry benchmarking reports like Korn Ferry (2022. Global Talent Management Outlook. Retrieved from: <https://www.kornferry.com/insights/this-week-in-leadership/global-talent-management-outlook>) utilize high staff retention rates within Marriott to demonstrate the effectiveness of such positive culture. Such stable labor force translates to consistent delivery and improved customer satisfaction. Schein's organizational culture model uses centrality of common values to underpin identification of behaviour (Schein, 2010). The culture within Marriott is an exemplar with core values ingrained within firm DNA that are consistently reinforced through initiatives. Such strong culture underlies operational effectiveness, staff commitment, and customer commitment that led to stable engaged labour force. The firm's focus on moral behaviour and social responsibility further underpins the firm's reputation and stakeholder relationships.

2.3. Corporate Unit Objectives & Personal Objectives

At the corporate level, the goals are sustainable growth, brand expansion, and shareholders' value maximization. It aims to achieve 3-6% annual long-run growth in RevPAR supported by its investor relations data (Marriott International, 2023c. Investor Relations Data. Retrieved from: <https://www.marriott.com/investor-relations/financial-information.mi>). This emphasis on the bottom-line is a reflection of the firm's competitiveness and the payout to the shareholders. The second principal objective is brand extension, where Marriott continuously strives to expand the brand portfolio through acquisition, partnership, and brand extension. The final product is an extended basis to address more segments of the customers from and to provide more depth to the targeted markets. The individual hotel property has the responsibility to provide operational efficiency and greater guest satisfaction. The indicators to this performance are the occupancy rates, the guests' feedback, and the web reviews. J.D. Power's North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Index

consistently ranks Marriott brands top spot, proof that the guest-centred initiatives are a winner (J.D. Power, 2023. North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Index Study. Retrieved from: <https://www.jdpower.com/business/press-releases/2023-north-america-hotel-guest-satisfaction-index-study>). Such indicators provide valuable feedback regarding the satisfaction of the customers and enable the hotel units to be aware of the areas to be worked upon. Goal-setting theory, introduced by Locke and Latham (2002) 'Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey', *American Psychologist*, 57(9), pp. 705-717, is replicated by specific targets to the performance and feedback mechanisms to create goal congruence between the corporate goals and the individual goals. Marriott's hierarchical system provides distinct lines of authority where divisional forms provide regional adaptation to enable global expansion. The "Marriott Way" unifies and provides direction, and diversity and inclusion bring reputation and attraction. Financial targets are easy to specify, with RevPAR and profitability to measure. Rewards exist for milestone achievements made towards improving efficiency and satisfaction. Performance is balanced through regular reviews. Brand growth and customer loyalty are fueled by brand growth and customer loyalty. Technology innovation powers operations and guest satisfaction, and good management translates to good finance. Corporate social responsibility boosts brand reputation and community relations. Continuous improvement by the organization puts it one step ahead of the hospitality sector.

3. Recent Change Initiatives

3.1. Identification of Change Initiatives

Marriott International recently underwent transformative changes with the inclusion of Starwood Hotels & Resorts, thus improving the digital platform significantly and fortifying sustainability efforts. Among the various tasks of this particular integration, the merging of loyalty programs had been done, along with aligning operational systems. The digital revolution focused on systems like AI-driven customer service and mobile booking. The sustainability initiatives of Marriott, as documented in 'Serve 360' Report, track reductions in water usage (Marriott International, 2023d. Serve 360: Doing Good in Every Direction. Retrieved from: <https://serve360.marriott.com/>).

3.2. Impact of Change Initiatives

The inclusion of Starwood in Marriott's market, though it increased its market share, turned out to be a formidable challenge to the company as it had to carry out integration. Digital upgrades led to enhanced guest experience and a streamlined operational system. The company's brand image improved through sustained sustainability strategies and its implementations saved costs at the same time.

Metrics showed that energy and water saved with the processes (Marriott International, 2023d).

3.3. Management of Change

Marriott mobilized the organizational change management model where employee training and communication strategies were used. This is why it is likely that Kotter's 8-Step Change Model was used to guide the integration (Kotter, 1996. *Leading change*. Harvard Business School Press.). The long and successful training handled new digital gadgets, and therefore the feedback mechanisms were closely watched. In his work, Burns (2016) reveals the one major area which is an important change strategy (Burns, B. 2016. *Managing change: A strategic approach to organisational dynamics*. Pearson UK.). Of course, Marriott's approach signifies the company's dedication to the dynamic industry. Dess, Lumpkin, & Eisner, 2018, have reported the strategic management aspect as the vital element to change adaptation (Dess, G. G., Lumpkin, G. T., & Eisner, A. B. 2018. *Strategic management: Creating competitive advantages*. McGraw-Hill Education.). Freeman (2010) recommends the need for stakeholder engagement in change management (Freeman, R. E. 2010. *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Cambridge University Press.).

4. Strategic Direction

4.1. Examination of Strategic Direction

The strategy of Marriott International Corporation is focused on aspects like global expansion, brand diversification, and digital innovation. The organization is interested in becoming a constant participant in emerging markets via the use of digital opportunities and hence grows its presence in those areas. It appears that it is this strategic management that is directly connected to the principle of resources-market alignment. That is to say, the company is keen on directing the resources at its disposal to such opportunities of the market (Porter, 1980). Marriott's commitment to responsible and sustainable business practices is a determining factor for the accomplishment of these strategies and the acceptance of the global market and stakeholders. In line with this, Grant (2016) shows the significance of the external analysis in determining the direction a company is likely to take, a case in point being Marriott.

4.2. Analysis of Implemented Strategies

Marriott is focused on attaining its objectives by means of several critical strategies. The brand segmentation technique gives the company the advantage of being able to target a wide range of customer segments, from low budget to luxury travelers. The Marriott Bonvoy loyalty program has improved customer retention and engagement with its clients. Airline carriers and travel agencies are the drivers of strategic partnerships helping the Marriott Group get coverage. Hill, Jones, &

Schilling (2014) insist that one of the most important elements of competitive advantage is the strategic implementation of the strategy. With a strong focus on technology and innovation in the sphere of operations and customer experience, 's investment has resulted in enhanced operating performance and customer satisfaction. Bryson (2018) stipulates that strategic planning for organisations should concentrate on reinforcing and sustaining organisational success, which makes Marriott's long term strategies stand out pretty clearly.

Recommendations

Enhance Digital Integration:

Supporting the business through innovations like investment in AI as a tool for easy and efficient operations and personalized guest experiences would add a lot of value to the business. The opportunities that predictive analytics can offer on operational data and service are numerous. Establishing a seamless digital platform would further reduce the manual and labor needs at the hotel. Who: IT, Marketing, Operations. When: Ongoing. Where: Global. Why: Improve satisfaction, loyalty. How: Increase digital budget, partnerships.

Strengthen Sustainability:

Setting bold and workable sustainability targets that can be measured would require that everyone in the organization fully commits to the goal. A crucial angle of sustainability is the enhancement of transparency in the way organizations disclose their progress, failures, and plans in sustainability reports. Direct relationship with the local groups including the residents and the local government should be improved. Because in the sustainability report we are aiming at immediate reporting, companies should have a clear plan towards such targets in the short term but also consider long-term dedication to the same. Where: All properties. Why: Enhance reputation, attract customers. How: Renewable energy, reduce waste.

Enhance Employee Engagement:

Building employee capability and performance through training and development is a vital strategic advantage that a company holds in the competitive market place. One of the strategies that company leaders can use to bridge the gap between themselves and employees is to provide them with a vehicle for getting their concerns aired. The best practice of Physical wellness programs that should be part of the initiatives is

Conclusion

Over the years, Marriott International has been able to stay creative and adaptable during the tough times of the global hospitality sector. Marriott has chiseled its image as a market leader, thanks to the tactful employment of a hybrid organizational structure, a deeply rooted corporate culture, and a clear focus on sustainability and innovation.

In the company's efficient management of Starwood Hotels & Resorts take-over, we see the company's commitment through digital transformation and ongoing development. Moreover, Marriott's commitment to the customer's satisfaction, employee's engagement, and corporate social responsibility is actually adding to their competitive advantage and is even forming the basis for its good relationship with stakeholders. 2 By bringing the corporate and individual objectives into harmony and through a culture of actual achievement, Marriott guarantees that all the layers of the organization work towards the achievement of the strategic vision. Challenges are part of a dynamic industry, in which, Marriott's enthusiasm for managing the change and business planning will push them towards continuous prosperity.

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