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A COMPARISON OF THE MARKETING METHODS OF TWO MULTINATIONAL HOTEL BRANDS

Introduction

I choose Premier Inn as I've stayed in there multiple times and we have one very close to our house. Marriott is a hotel which I've always liked in general, hopefully one day I'll stay there.

Marketing strategies used by Premier Inn

Premier Inn is a British hotel chain, being UK's largest hotel brand, it has more than 800 hotels as of November 2022 ¹. Marketed as a budget-friendly hotel focusing on comfort, consistency, and transparency, Premier Inn has been voted the Best Budget Hotel Brand at the Business Traveller Awards 2019, 2020 & 2021². The franchise has multiple marketing strategies aimed at diverse situations, catering for short breaks, city breaks, beach breaks and family breaks, aiming at individuals, couples and families. Whilst their prices are slightly above average and higher than their competitors, the slightly higher prices indicate a higher sense of quality than their close competitors in the same market ³. Whilst having an impressive 800 hotels, they have a hotel in nearly in major and surrounding cities, making it very popular first choice. Its popularity gives off a sense of legitimacy, security and assurance.

Premier Inn has multiple pricing strategies i.e., Flex, Semi-Flex, Advance, Standard and non-Flex rates ⁴, providing customers with multiple options for various budgets. Premier Inns trademark Flex option being the most flexible option allowing you to cancel or change your stay up to 1pm on the day you are due to arrive. Their prices steadily go up along with the value, aiming to provide customers with a sense of great value for money. Aiming to be as transparent as possible, Premier Inn lists everything you receive in your room, allows you to book rooms of all prices and gives the option of booking all meals separately allowing for flexibility and freedom in pricings. Appealing at the family market segment, they offer dedicated family rooms with single beds, double beds and baby cots, offering free children stays and free breakfasts at all Premier Inn hotel ⁵. Aiming to improve their catering experience for disabled people, they have also teamed up with Purple Tuesday and signed up to the Sunflower ⁶ and have offered multiple disabled students' careers at Premier Inn ⁷. They have installed defibrillators in all hotels and have a mandatory emergency first-aider always present in all hotels, showing it's care for their customers safety ⁸.

Rooms are kept clean and airy giving the impression of a more spacious area even in the smaller rooms, using black-outs, extra-pillows and custom mattresses they aim to provide maximum comfort at affordable prices, researching their pillows and mattresses to offer superior comfort over the competitors ⁹. They recently launched an all-day county music radio station as their recent research revealed that a growing number of people are turning to ambient noise to focus or rest, with over 70% of 16–24-year-olds using audio to sleep.¹⁰ Focusing on easy relaxation and sleep, they've

¹ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/home.html>

² <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/why/awards.html>

³ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10603-018-9367-2>

⁴ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/fag/room-rates.html>

⁵ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/why/family.html>

⁶ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/news/2022/sunflower.html>

⁷ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/news/2020/disabled-students.html>

⁸ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/news/2020/defibrillators.html>

⁹ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/news/2019/buy-our-pillows.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/news/2022/country-music.html>

recently posted a news article regarding the most relaxing celebrity audiobooks ¹¹, have regularly written and posted multiple articles writing tips on how to maximise comfort and relaxation. Premier Inn have implemented multiple independent surveys in matters related to their customer service, trying to get the optimal levels of comfort for their hotels and resorts.

Premier Inn understands the use of branding, its purple logo colour suggests quality and luxury ¹². Its logo of a sleeping moon crescent suggests relaxation and comfort whilst its motto “rest easy” gives assurance and confirmation. They have multiple social media accounts that give updates on events and news, including Twitter for news and Instagram for inspiration and sleep tips. Premier Inn regularly donates to multiple charities recently donating 335,000 meals in support of Stop Food Waste Day ¹³ and 65,000 meals to charity during the coronavirus crisis ¹⁴. They have also made an effort to remove all unnecessary single-use plastics from their hotels by 2025 ¹⁵, marketing themselves towards a more environmental demographic.

In conclusion, Premier Inns primary focus is on a good night’s sleep, they cater for a wide variety of individuals, families and situations and aim to give affordable prices, with a steady increase of value the more you pay, luring you to book a higher priced booking. They market themselves with social media accounts, blog posts, their regular charity, disability and environmental work whilst aiming to optimise comfort at an affordable price. All in all, the marketing strategies of Premier Inn are of many and have made them one of the UK’s leading hotel franchises.

Marketing strategies used by Marriott Hotels & Resorts

Marriott Hotels & Resorts is an American hotel chain owned by Marriott International, Inc. It is the United States second largest hotel brand, it has more than 582 hotels as of June 2022 ¹⁶ marketed as a full-service hotel focusing on luxury and speed. Looking at Marriott’s strategic marketing campaigns we find many ways Marriott used to drive more bookings.

Marriott found that 79% of people say user-generated content highly impacted their purchasing decisions and studies found social media campaigns incorporating UGC strategies get a whopping 50% more engagement ¹⁷. Taking advantage of this, Marriott teamed up with Snapchat to boost their bookings by 35%, taking advantage of Snapchats Story Ads, Collection Ads and Dynamic Ads to engage with a younger audience and using Snapchat to significantly boost their business sales over their competitors to ultimately make them book a stay with Marriott ¹⁸. Marriott partnered with popular Snapchat influences to make short, segmented travel documentaries, each segment being around 2 minutes to cater for the younger audience’s short attention span ¹⁹, making themselves more relatable to younger audiences using what the target audience uses most, social media.

The current younger generation rarely use advertisement to make purchases, most advertisements are ignored and skipped, relying primarily on social media influence and word of mouth ²⁰, this is something Marriott understands better than its competitors, it seeks out fast teasing advertisements that are created by relatable influences. They aim to make their advertisements discreet and not in any way intrusive, which allows audiences to watch the short videos without feeling robbed of their time. Marriott’s current application attempts to create loyal

¹¹ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/news/2022/audiobooks-to-rest-easy.html>

¹² <https://www.businessinsider.com/branding-and-the-psychology-of-color-2012-12>

¹³ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/news/2020/stop-food-waste-day.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/news/2020/food-donation.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/news/2020/single-use-plastics.html>

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriott_Hotels_%26_Resorts#cite_note-2

¹⁷ <https://www.matthewwoodward.co.uk/work/user-generated-content-statistics/>

¹⁸ https://forbusiness.snapchat.com/inspiration/marriott-bonvoy-exceeds-roi-by3_4x-with-snapchat

¹⁹ <https://www.onlineoptimism.com/blog/social-media-marketing-and-the-gen-z-attention-span/>

²⁰ <https://charlespostiaux.medium.com/nope-people-dont-watch-commercials-c721f095d020>

customers, Marriott found that customers want apps to make their experiences hassle-free and a majority of customers use applications for fast access and then remove the booking out of their way ²¹. Marriott's app allows you to go straight to your room and open the door with your smartphone making the experience as fast as possible. Having the application unintrusive, Marriott's allows you to download the application and forget about it, removing the need to uninstall the application as 75% of mobile users uninstall apps within the first 90 days ²².

In conclusion, Marriott marketing strategies aren't like most hotels, they excel at social media marketing, partnering with influences and social media website to drastically boost their sales. Primary targeting a younger audience that not many hotels tend to put their time and effort into.

Comparison of marketing strategies between Premier Inn & Marriott

Marriott's marketing strategies currently trump that of Premier Inns, and in general have a much greater impact especially towards a younger audience. Premier Inns lack of reliance on social media to market themselves has severely limited their customer demographic. Their current status on using social media as a means of advertisement is lacklustre, and their hiatuses and irregular intervals of posts has unfortunately slowed growth towards their social media accounts. In contrast to Marriott, whose accounts post almost daily interacting with their customers and showcasing user's photography.

Marriott's more impressive and more organised marketing represents their higher prices, they've structured in much more time and effort into their marketing for the younger generation of audiences who want a fast check-in and check-out, funding their application to make this process as fast and efficient as possible without overloading their customers with intrusive advertisements. This also gives their social media accounts a much greater following and impact when compared to Premier Inn's. Premier Inn's lack of social media marketing tends not to attract much of a younger audience, but farewells much better with families and those who are budget conscious, and an older audience who are not as familiar with technology and application use.

Both write and post regular blog posts and news, but Marriott's comes off as much more professional. Whilst Premier Inn has made substantial efforts in improving their hotels for environmental reasons, Marriott has also done the same. Putting out a very transparent report on their environmental progress including their goal to reach net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by no later than 2050, and their charity work of committing of up to \$50 million to support historically underrepresented groups who typically face barriers in owning and developing hotels in North America, more much far suppressing that of Premier Inns ²³. Their sustainability, social and environmental impact far suppress that of Premiers inns. With a much larger funding, Marriott has the ability to implement many of these changes which Premier Inn unfortunately do not.

In conclusion, each franchise excels at their target audiences and demographics, but both could learn by studying the others' marketing strategies and techniques. Marriot, having much greater funding, represents a near-peak in social media marketing strategies whilst Premier Inn has much to work on for their future growth, especially towards their younger audiences.

²¹ <https://www.heady.io/blog/new-data-shows-57-of-shoppers-prefer-mobile-apps-to-other-channels>

²² <https://dazeinfo.com/2016/05/19/mobile-app-retention-churn-rate-smartphone-users/>

²³ <https://news.marriott.com/news/2022/10/27/marriott-international-publishes-latest-report-on-environmental-social-and-governance-progress>