

Marriott Research Study

The Problem

Marriott's website was looked at to see how it could be improved and make for a better customer experience. A research study would help indicate what areas of the website could be redesigned and made an easier experience for customers.

Lacking user research creates opportunities for guessing and hoping to know target customers instead of knowing exactly what they're looking for and what they need. User research can also be used at different parts of the process from the beginning and even after the first prototypes and launch are underway to make sure the data collected matches to the results.

Goals

- Find what Marriott's users look for in booking a hotel room
- Figure out what they need when traveling and finding a hotel
- What time of the day and where users are booking rooms?
- What areas on the website and application make users confused and abandon the reservation?
- Find out what parts of the redesigned website/application are user friendly and which are not

Actions

- Conducted user interviews to gain understanding as to what areas of the website participants struggled with and what their experience booking a room at Marriott was like
- Collected and analyzed the research notes from the recorded sessions and split them into categories to synthesize findings

Results

Find what Marriott's users look for in booking a hotel room

- I found that the users were most interested in the location and making sure there were Marriott hotels at the location of their choosing and that it was close to a lot of important places and transportation services

Figure out what they need when traveling and finding a hotel

- Location and easy to navigate website with lots of additional information about the surrounding area and the room amenities.

What time of the day and where users are booking rooms?

- At home just browsing on their laptop/desktop (not on a mobile device) usually later in the day after work.

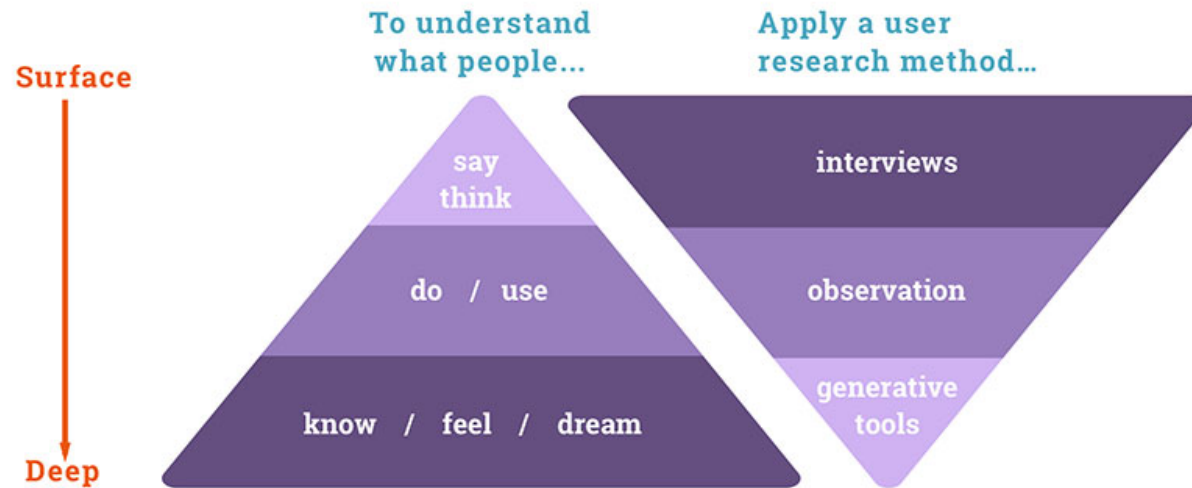
What areas on the website and application make users confused and abandon the reservation?

- We found that users are booking the hotel rooms fine but had a few suggestions about what to add or change to the current web pages like the location/date selection process of viewing the individual rooms

Lessons Learned

This study furthered my recording/interviewing research proficiency and I really started to utilize card sorting and learned that analyzing research findings is a time consuming and vital part of the research process.

The Importance of User Research - Research Memo



What is User Research?

According to *Observing the User Experience*, “user research is the process of figuring out how people interpret and use products and services.” That statement could not be more basic in the sense that user research has so much to it and holds extreme value these days in getting customers to become loyal with brands/companies. Countless examples from Lego to Apple have used user research in adapting and changing their current designs in order to create a better experience for their customers. By understanding who your customers are, what they do/think, and why they make decisions will make it easier to determine the types of design that needs to take place. My team and I believe that user research is indeed vital in the rework of the Marriott desktop/mobile experience for guests.

Benefits of User Research

The aspect of user research is quite extensive and requires an understanding of the target customers in order to decide which kinds of user research is needed. Focus groups, interviews, and observing customers are all different forms of user research and determining which ones to move forward with is key in getting started with user research. Knowing exactly how customers are likely to book a hotel room, what they are looking for/need from a hotel experience, and overall travel preferences are all key in finding out the best way to re design the Marriott experience and user research will help point out these questions. In a perfect world, the customer experience and Marriott's goals would both be mirrored and successful with the help of user research. There are several methods and designs that could be researched in order to get to that point.

How Marriott Could Use User Research

I briefly observed a few participants explore the Marriott website and attempt to book a hotel room in a certain location. After the exercise, I would suggest continuing this idea and interviewing participants on multiple topics from overall travel necessities to hotel amenities preferences to questions about other hotel experiences. This interview process will get some generic answers but also some really valuable information about the customers and what they really need out of a vacation and hotel experience. Another option to find out more about current customers would be to have a focus group. Focus groups allow for more questions and getting to the root of understanding people's traveling and hotel needs. With many people involved, this could be a great way to include several people in a shorter amount of time. Observing people in their every day lives and engaging with the current Marriott website/application will also keep getting results on what areas they struggle with or what areas might need to be improved upon. Just from observing a few participants for about 10 minutes at a time allowed me to realize that steps like typing in the location they are looking to travel or important information that needs to be read over before continuing on should possibly be placed into an easy to see pop-up screen. There could be so much more data and knowledge about Marriott's current customers with more research and observations. Each of these methods will help in the redesign process for Marriott and show just what customers need and want from the new website/application.

What do you get out of it?

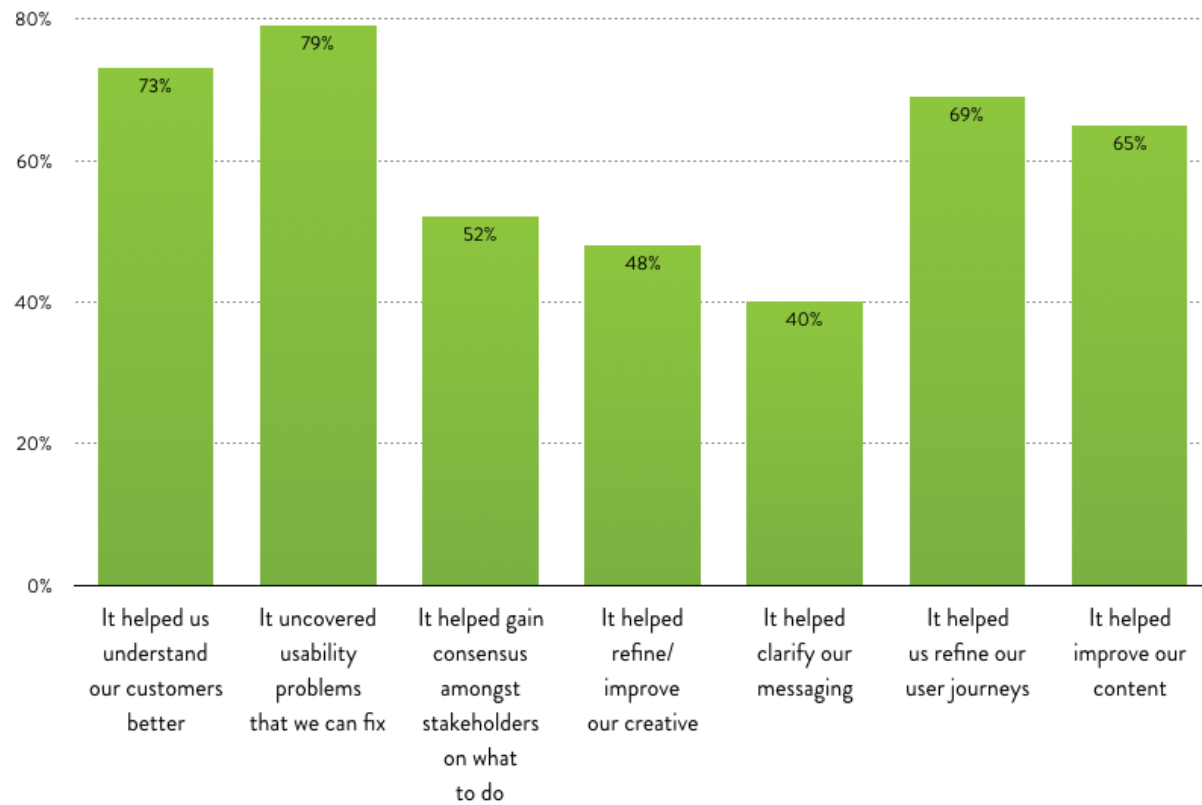


Chart showing why companies do user research and what they get out of it

Why User Research is Essential for Marriott

If Marriott wants to have a successful redesign of their website/application, then doing user research will be vital in creating an easy to use and interesting experience for guests. Lacking user research creates opportunities for guessing and hoping to know target customers instead of knowing exactly what they're looking for and what they need. My team and I highly suggest taking three or four different research methods into determining just what kind of direction the redesign should be taken. User research can also be used at different parts of the process from the beginning and even after the first prototypes and launch are underway to make sure the data collected matches to the results. There is so much to gain from user research and knowledge that in the long run, could greatly change the way guests book hotels rooms and interact with Marriott.

User Research Interviews

Interview Plan

User Research Goals

- Find what Marriott's users look for in booking a hotel room
- Figure out what they need when traveling and finding a hotel
- What time of the day and where users are booking rooms
- What areas on the website and application make users confused and abandon the reservation
- Find out what parts of the redesigned website/application are user friendly and which are not

User Research Questions

- What is the demographic makeup of our user population?
- How do people choose a hotel?
- Why do people start a hotel search and then not complete a reservation?
- When do people use the website vs. the mobile app?
- What value are customers looking for in a hotel loyalty program
- What are users most important needs when traveling and finding a hotel room?

- What are users most important needs when looking for a hotel room with Marriott?
- What time of the day are users normally booking a room and where are they?
- What areas of the redesigned prototype are users comfortable with and which areas are they struggling with?
- How often are users already members and does becoming a member cause users to abandon booking a hotel room?

Hypothesis

- Guests book hotel rooms on a desktop more than mobile
- Members book rooms on the app more than on a desktop
- Guests are struggling when booking a room and taking much longer than anticipated to do this
- One of guests most important needs is to make sure there's a hotel in the location they are looking for
- Users struggle with certain parts of the booking process more than they should

Interview Guide

Introduction

Hi _____. My name is Justin and I will be asking you some questions today.

We're asking people to answer questions about the booking process through either Marriott's website or app. That's why we've brought you here today.

Please answer all questions to the best of your ability and there are no wrong answers. We are here to learn about you and your experiences. This will help us better conduct our work and make the booking process through Marriott as smooth as possible!

Feel free to discuss or answer any of these questions at length but know that we may not be able to spend a large amount of time on each question.

In between certain questions and answers, I may be jotting down a few notes so be aware of that.

Also, you'll see I am recording this interview with your permission for research purposes. Your answers will be kept anonymous and only used for this research. Please look over this consent form and let me know if you have any questions.

If you don't have any questions, please sign this consent form and read it over carefully.

Do you have any questions at this time?

Warm-Up

So you're from _____? What do you like to do there for fun?

(follow up question as needed)

What are some places that you would most want to visit?

(follow up question as needed)

Interview Questions

(some questions were adapted depending on participants' answers)

- 1.) How often would you say you go on vacation?
 - a.) Are there other reasons you may be traveling?
- 2.) What are some of your favorite vacations you've ever been on?
 - a.) What was that experience like?
- 3.) What are some reasons you've had to look for a hotel room in the past?
- 4.) When finding a hotel room, what are some things you find are necessary?
 - a.) Can you tell me more about that?
- 5.) How do you choose a hotel to stay at?
- 6.) What are some ways you search for a hotel?
- 7.) Have you ever had a frustrating experience trying to book a hotel room?
- 8.) Tell me about your experience booking a hotel room with Marriott
 - a.) Describe the process you went through to book a room?
- 9.) Why have you chosen Marriott as your hotel in the past?
 - a.) Tell me more about that
- 10.) What did you find on the homepage or home screen for Marriott?
- 11.) When you selected a location and date for a hotel room, what happened next?

12.) What happened when you selected a room?

13.) What are your overall thoughts on the booking process?

a.) Can you elaborate on that?

14.) What time of the day would you say you generally look for a hotel?

15.) Where are you at when you book a room?

16.) Describe what you're doing when you browse for a hotel room?

Cool-Down

Is there anywhere you're traveling to in the future that you're excited about?

a.) follow up questions about that trip

Wrap-Up

That's it for my questions. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your experiences booking a hotel room?

(response)

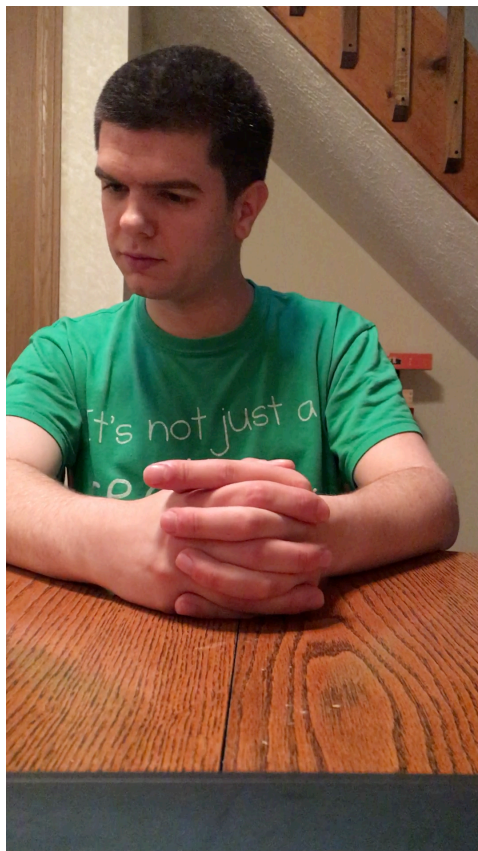
Thank you very much for your time. We really appreciate you taking time out of your day to help us with this research.

You'll be receiving your \$50 by check in the mail in a couple of days.

From here, we'll be sending you a follow-up email to thank you again and allow you to elaborate on anything else you may have forgotten during this time.

Interview Summary

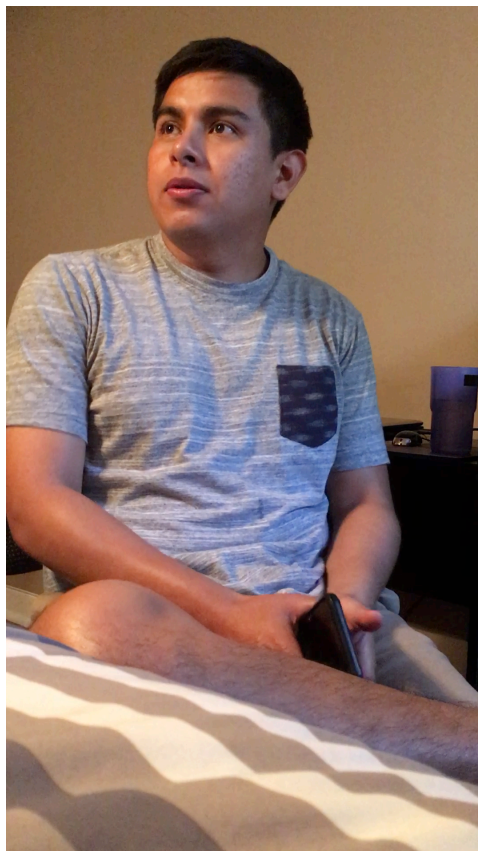
1. Interview participant #1
 - a. Andrew
 - b. Male
 - c. 21-30
 - d. Nursing Home Non-Profit Advocate
 - e. About twice per year
 - f. Yes
2. The environment was at a table in a brightly lit room and the temperature was cool so that the participant felt comfortable.
3. The participant had shorter answers so I needed to ask follow up questions in order to get more of an answer. The interviewee had positive things overall to say about Marriott and only confessed a couple of concerns. The participant also mentioned using the website more than the app. This will need to be followed up with several similar interviews or research methods to determine more of an opinion about the booking process with Marriott.



1. Interview participant #2
 - a. Cheryl
 - b. Female
 - c. 61-70
 - d. Admissions Counselor
 - e. About 3 times per year
 - f. Yes
2. The interview took place in a bright room with chairs and couches available. Drinks were provided if the participant wanted anything.
3. This participant has traveled for vacations quite a bit over the years and has gone through Marriott several times. They had a few concerns about the website and the booking process that will need to be looked into more in-depth moving forward. The interviewee had descriptive responses and was able to explain the booking process through their perspective very well. They mentioned using the website most often and tend to browse on their laptop most of the time.



1. Interview participant #3
 - a. Miguel
 - b. Male
 - c. 21-30
 - d. Assistant Director of Admissions
 - e. 7-10 times per year
 - f. Yes
2. The interview took place in a bright room with chairs and couches available. Drinks were provided if the participant wanted anything which they gladly excepted.
3. This participant travels a great deal for work and so they stay with Marriott quite often. They are also a member so they described their experience being a member and going through the booking process extensively. The interviewee had a lot to say about the website and pointed out some areas of concern. They mentioned not really using the mobile app and tended to use the website and a desktop version most of the time.



Marriott Report Proposal

Using user research smartly

By: Justin Druga



Executive Summary

This report proposes different user research tactics for Marriott's website and smartphone application redesigns. Here are your top five business goals for the digital properties:

- Increase hotel bookings via digital properties by 10%
- Increase reservations for their Luxury and Lifestyle Collection hotel categories
- Gain 10,000 incremental members of the Marriott Rewards loyalty program in the first quarter after the redesign
- Decrease by 20% the number of people starting and then abandoning a reservation
- Increase by 5% the number of people choosing a hotel and flight package (vs. just booking their hotel alone)

Once research is done, we will understand Marriott's users more clearly and know what steps need to be taken in the design process. Our research goals are:

- Find what Marriott's users look for in booking a hotel room
- Figure out what they need when traveling and finding a hotel
- What time of the day and where users are booking rooms
- What areas on the website and application make users confused and abandon the reservation
- Find out what parts of the redesigned website/application are user friendly

After gathering these goals, we have decided to continue the research process with individual interviews, focus groups, and surveys during the analyzing portion. We will then conduct another round of interviews, observations, and usability testing during the initial design phase.

User Experience Issues

Issues that may not satisfy business goals:

- Confusing layout and date options that are not easily clickable
- Wording and setup of the “become a member” pop-up screen
- Customers not sure about becoming a member or think it is mandatory
- Terms and Conditions section being poorly located and hard to see

User Experience Issues

Further issues:

- Searching for a Marriott location
- Limited selections for specific locations
- Not seeing options easily for flight + hotel options
- Amenities not listed in a normal spot
- Not too much detail on each room and its' amenities

Research Goals

- Find what Marriott's users look for in booking a hotel room
- Figure out what they need when traveling and finding a hotel
- What time of the day and where users are booking rooms
- What areas on the website and application make users confused and abandon the reservation
- Find out what parts of the redesigned website/application are user friendly and which are not

User Experience Questions

Your top five user experience questions:

- What is the demographic makeup of our user population?
- How do people choose a hotel?
- Why do people start a hotel search and then not complete a reservation?
- When do people use the website vs. the mobile app?
- What value are customers looking for in a hotel loyalty program?

With further research and analyzing, we will better understand your users and be able to answer these important questions based on the goals mentioned earlier.

General research questions

Questions based on our research goals

- What are users most important needs when traveling and finding a hotel room?
 - Are they interested in the room and its' amenities more or the location? Price?
 - Is location the main thing users are interested in when booking? If not, what is?
- Are users mainly traveling for work or for pleasure?
- Are customers booking with Marriott because they are members and want to earn more points?

General research questions

Questions based on our research goals

- What are users most important needs when looking for a hotel room with Marriott?
 - Are they struggling with anything from the homepage?
 - Choosing a location or date?
- How often are users already members and does becoming a member cause users to abandon booking a hotel room?
- What areas of the booking process are users struggling to move through quickly?

General research questions

Questions based on our research goals

- What time of the day are users normally booking a room and where are they?
 - Are users at their laptops or on their phones when booking and are they in a hurry to book something or are they taking their time?
 - When booking a room via website or their phone, is there a noticeable amount of time difference between the two platforms?
- Are users booking at a specific time or are they at random just looking through options whenever they find the time?
- What are the demographics for Marriott's users and where are they located?
 - Are these users traveling for work or going away on vacation from a specific location?

General research questions

Questions based on our research goals once initial designs are completed

- What areas of the redesigned prototype are users comfortable with and which areas are they struggling with?
 - Do the new designs confirm the problems users were having with the old design?
 - What areas still need improved upon?
 - Are users still struggling to navigate through the booking process anywhere specifically?
- What areas that were changed are easy to use for customers?

All of these questions will be answered when the research phase is complete and we will have a better understanding of Marriott's customers and their needs.

Recommendations for next steps

Based on the goals/questions we have all had, our next steps for research are:

- Individual interviews to find out more about Marriott's users and their overall needs in traveling and booking a hotel room
- Focus groups to further understand your users needs and wants
- Surveys about the current Marriott website and other key competitors websites

After these steps are taken, the design process will begin and we will then start to introduce other forms of research based on these initial designs using:

- Another round of interviews asking about their needs and showing a few pages of the redesigned website
- Observing users navigate through the different web pages and application
- Usability testing through different tasks on the website and application

Marriott Report Proposal

“Our core values make us who we are. As we change and grow, the beliefs that are most important to us stay the same—putting people first, pursuing excellence, embracing change, acting with integrity and serving our world. Being part of Marriott International means being part of a proud history and a thriving culture.”



Marriott User Research Findings

What we have learned

Justin Druga



Executive Summary

This report shows the user research tactic for Marriott's website and smartphone application redesigns that was proposed. Here are the top five business goals for the digital properties:

- Increase hotel bookings via digital properties by 10%
- Increase reservations for their Luxury and Lifestyle Collection hotel categories
- Gain 10,000 incremental members of the Marriott Rewards loyalty program in the first quarter after the redesign
- Decrease by 20% the number of people starting and then abandoning a reservation
- Increase by 5% the number of people choosing a hotel and flight package (vs. just booking their hotel alone)

Executive Summary

Once research was done, we analyzed the data so we could better understand Marriott's users more clearly and know what steps need to be taken in the design process. Our research goals were:

- Find what Marriott's users look for in booking a hotel room
- Figure out what they need when traveling and finding a hotel
- What time of the day and where users are booking rooms
- What areas on the website and application make users confused and abandon the reservation
- Find out what parts of the redesigned website/application are user friendly

After gathering these goals, we conducted three individual interviews to better understand what Marriott's customers need and want out of the booking process.

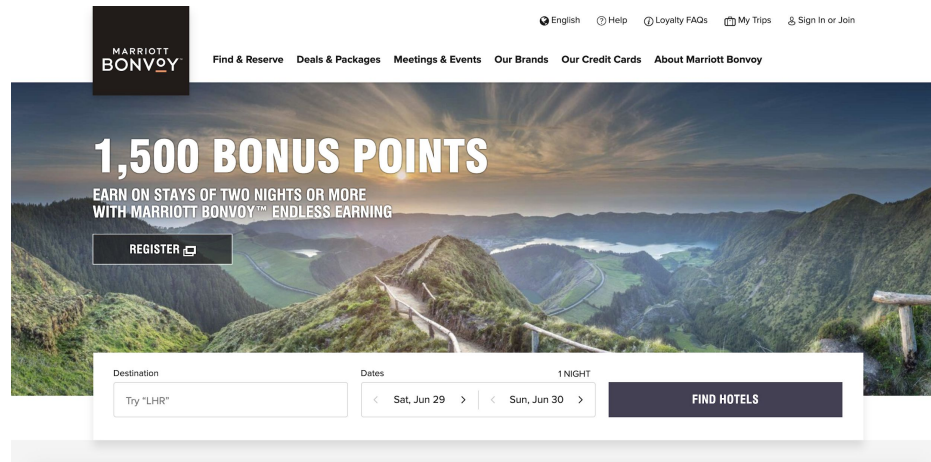
Executive Summary

We concluded the research process for the interviews by analyzing the data and figuring out what themes and key takeaways there were from those three participants.



Background

Marriott is looking to improve upon and redesign their website and smartphone application booking process.



We were brought in to help discover what users needs are when booking a hotel room but to also take into consideration Marriott's business goals and needs.

Business Needs

The following were Marriott's business goals when entering the research phase:

- What is the demographic makeup of our user population?
- How do people choose a hotel?
- Why do people start a hotel search and then not complete a reservation?
- When do people use the website vs. the mobile app?
- What value are customers looking for in a hotel loyalty program?

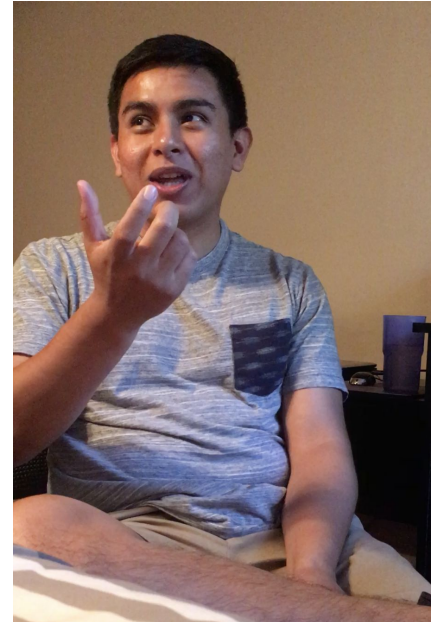
Research Goals

The following were our goals when conducting the three interviews:

- Find what Marriott's users look for in booking a hotel room
- Figure out what they need when traveling and finding a hotel
- What time of the day and where users are booking rooms
- What areas on the website and application make users confused and abandon the reservation
- Find out what parts of the redesigned website/application are user friendly and which are not

Research Method

After careful consideration, we decided to conduct three interviews with customers who have booked a hotel room with Marriott within the last 6 months.



User Interviews

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1wCoyfR_QEOFlu_jitFcfLpTm4BWTOBjt



User Interviews

1. Andrew
 - a. Male
 - b. Age 21-30
 - c. Nursing Home Care Advocate
 - d. Travels about twice per year

The participant had shorter answers so I needed to ask follow up questions in order to get more of an answer. The interviewee had positive things overall to say about Marriott and only confessed a couple of concerns. The participant also mentioned using the website more than the app.

“I certainly like to plan so I like to do a little bit of research before I book anything. I like to set some time aside to actually focus on that.”

User Interviews

1. Cheryl
 - a. Female
 - b. Age 61-70
 - c. Admissions Counselor
 - d. Travels about three times per year

This participant has traveled for vacations quite a bit over the years and has gone through Marriott several times. The interviewee had descriptive responses and was able to explain the booking process through their perspective very well. They mentioned using the website most often and tend to browse on their laptop.

“You see the room but you don’t see what’s around the hotel. I think that would be kind of neat to say ‘hey we’re here and this is nearby.’ I always thought that would be cool.”

User Interviews

1. Miguel
 - a. Male
 - b. Age 21-30
 - c. Assistant Director of Admissions
 - d. Travels about 7-10 times per year

This participant travels a great deal for work and so they stay with Marriott quite often. They are also a member so they described their experience being a member and going through the booking process extensively. They mentioned not really using the mobile app and tended to use the website on a desktop mostly.

For work and being a member: “I ended up choosing Marriott. I knew it was affordable, it was in many places I go to, and I kind of know what I’m going to get in terms of services.....My experience has been pretty positive in booking as a member from those three things I mentioned. I know what I’m going to get.”

Data Analysis

Interview Notes - We watched and took extensive notes about each interview participant's answers

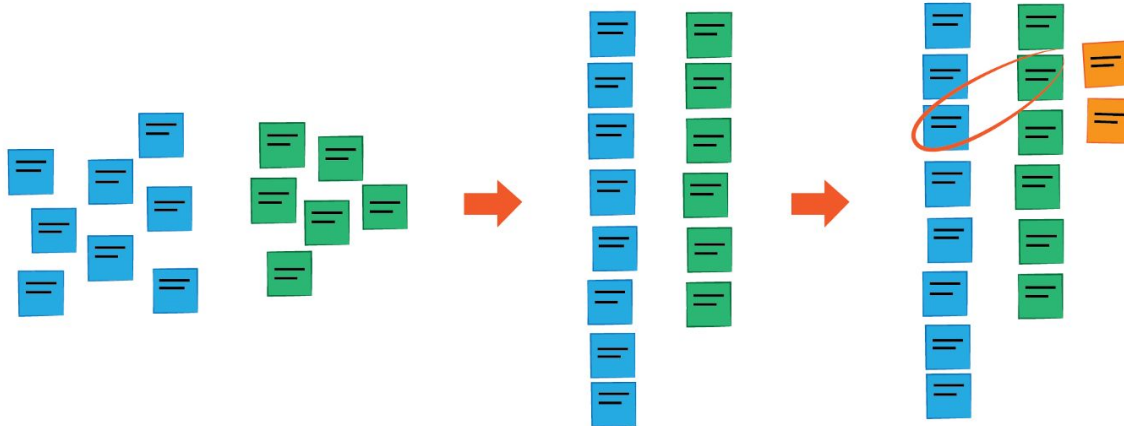
Once complete, we started looking for overall talking point themes that dealt with what areas we were looking for in terms of our research goals and Marriott's needs as a business.



Data Analysis

Categories - Next we split up our notes into categories into Excel and from there continued to brainstorm sub categories and so on through the post-it note method.

Once we had a few different groupings together, we started seeing how often certain talking points occurred with each participant



Data Analysis

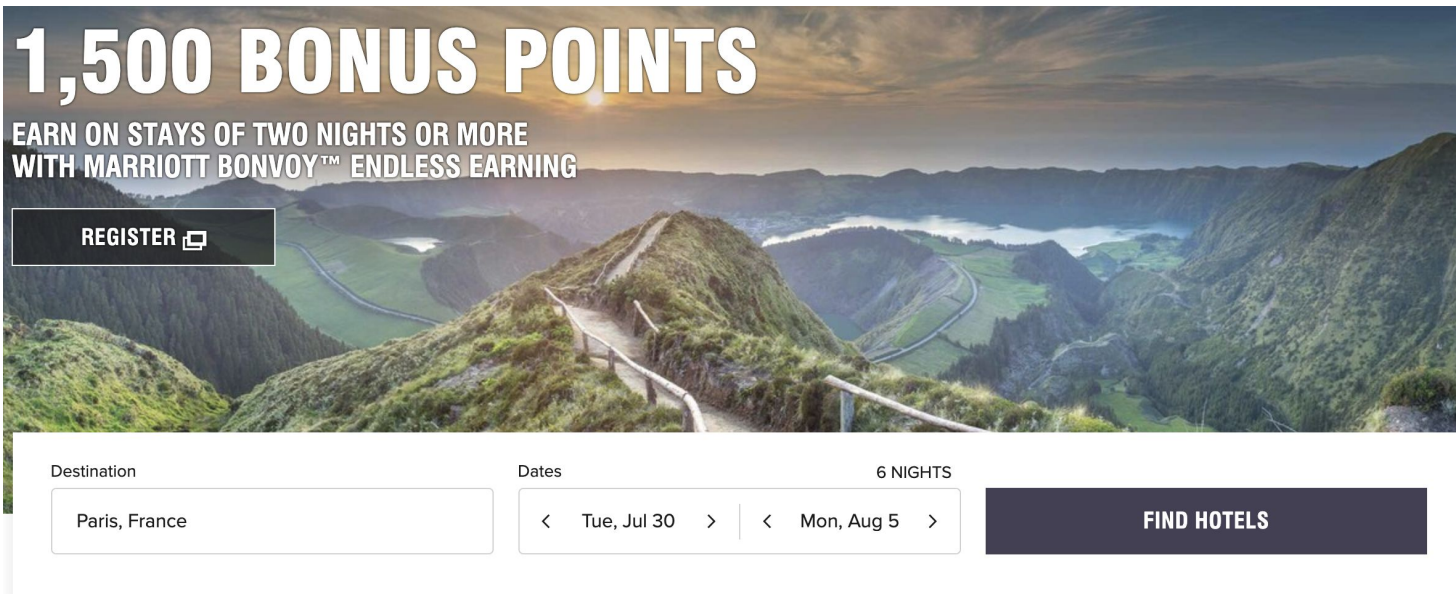
Data Entry and Conclusions - Finally, we entered everything into our database for analysis and looked to see if our findings ended up matching up with our hypothesis' and if our research goals were met.

We also highlighted a few of the important takeaways from each interview to refer back to.




Research Results

Find what Marriott's users look for in booking a hotel room - We found that the users were most interested in the location and making sure there were Marriott hotels at the location of their choosing and that it was close to a lot of important places and transportation services.



1,500 BONUS POINTS
EARN ON STAYS OF TWO NIGHTS OR MORE
WITH MARRIOTT BONVOY™ ENDLESS EARNING

REGISTER 

Destination: Paris, France

Dates: 6 NIGHTS
< Tue, Jul 30 > | < Mon, Aug 5 >

FIND HOTELS

Research Results

Figure out what they need when traveling and finding a hotel - Location and easy to navigate website with lots of additional information about the surrounding area and the room amenities.

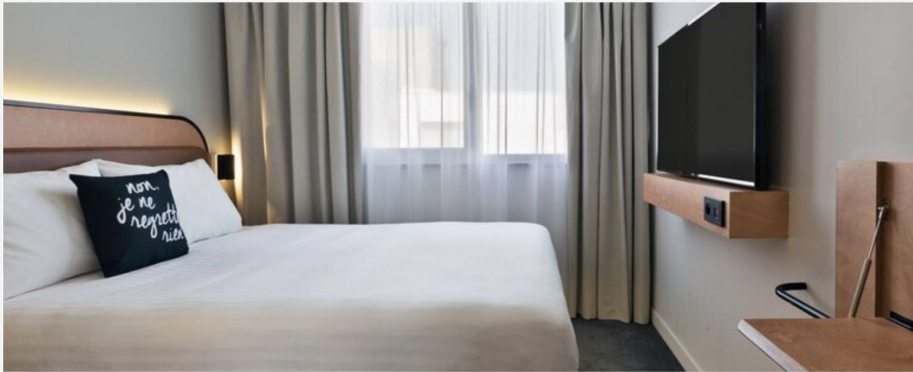
What time of the day and where users are booking rooms - At home just browsing on their laptop/desktop (not on a mobile device) usually later in the day after work.

What areas on the website and application make users confused and abandon the reservation - We found that users are booking the hotel rooms fine but had a few suggestions about what to add or change to the current web pages like the location/date selection process of viewing the individual rooms.

Research Results

Find out what parts of the redesigned website/application are user friendly and which are **not** - Based on some of the knowledge we gathered from the interviews, we would want to find this information out at a later date.

Review Reservation Details



Moxy Sleeper, Guest room, 1 Queen

ROOM DETAILS

Check in: Tuesday, July 30, 2019

Check out: Monday, August 5, 2019

Room(s): 1

Guest(s) per room: 1

[EDIT](#)

✓ Choose Room Features

Research Recommendations

Based on the goals/answers we have gathered, our next steps for research are:

- Another round of Individual interviews to confirm about Marriott's users and their overall needs in traveling and booking a hotel room. We want to see if the findings we gathered will stay true in another set of individuals.
- Focus groups to further understand the users needs and wants
- Usability testing with some of the participants we interview to see the changes in the way they navigate through the booking process and their feedback on some of the changes we make.

Research Recommendations

After these steps are taken, the design process will begin and we will then start to introduce other forms of research based on these initial designs using:

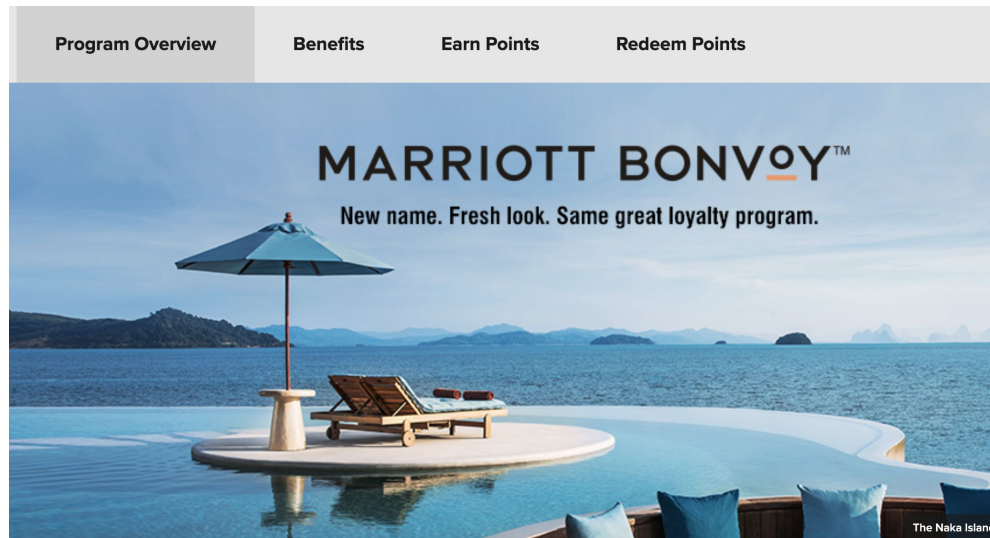
- Another round of interviews asking about some of the answers we received from the first round of interviews. More in-depth questions about those certain areas to make sure our hypothesis' are in fact correct.
- Observing users navigate through the different web pages and application including some of the participants that we interviewed previously
- Usability testing through different tasks on the website and application

Research Recommendations

We will continue to test our findings and to develop the booking process through our research findings for a better user experience for Marriott's guests.

Prototypes, user journeys, and initial designs will take place to ensure guests needs, our research goals/hypothesis', and Marriott's business needs are all met with.

Now let's create one amazing user experience for Marriott guests!



Marriott User Research Findings

“Our core values make us who we are. As we change and grow, the beliefs that are most important to us stay the same—putting people first, pursuing excellence, embracing change, acting with integrity and serving our world. Being part of Marriott International means being part of a proud history and a thriving culture.”

