**Assignment 14.1: Salmon Run to Spawning Ground: Final Project**

Olivia Ujlaki and Lorie Towsley

Emerson College

DD-603-02: Social and Mobile Marketing

Prof. Carol Ferrara

April 23, 2022

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### **Marketing Brief**

**Company Overview**

Fairmont Hotels and Resorts was founded under AccorHotels in 1907 to provide guests with “world-class service,” in unique locations to “create one-of-a-kind, lasting memories.” The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, one of the group’s most-popular resorts, is a AAA, Five-Diamond Award destination on 65 scenic acres of land in Scottsdale, Arizona.

**Campaign purpose**

To establish the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess as a leader in hybrid-meetings and events.

**Project summary**

A three-month social media campaign on Twitter and LinkedIn. We will post 2 to 3 times/week. Week A will feature “bleisure,” (business and leisure) activities and Week B will highlight past events and unique benefits to the Fairmont. We will also take out paid ads on Twitter and LinkedIn, and bid on keywords for Google and Bing search results to support organic push.

**Campaign objectives**

To bolster brand trust through community engagement, and to sign on one new Fortune 500 company every event cycle to use the Fairmont’s hybrid meeting services.

**KPIs**

To acquire 500 new followers per month and to receive at least 80 comments on each social post, and to increase unique website visitors by 30% each month, and to communicate directly with fifteen qualified leads per month.

**Target audience**

Meeting and event planners who work for Fortune 500 tech companies on the west coast such as Apple, Google, Netflix, or Slack.

**Campaign strategy**

A customer-centric approach with personalized content that reflects Millennial values such as sustainability, diversity and inclusion, and personalized experiences that put potential guests’ needs first.

**Deliverables**

A bank of subject-approved, edited, and resized photos for bleisure activities and hotel amenities, and a list of fact-checked information pertaining to sustainability and climate change.

**Budget**

Paid ads will require a budget of $10,000 a month with a total spend of $30,000. We will start with $4,000 in social media ads, $4,000 in Google ads, and $2,000 in Bing ads. These ads will run a full 30 days before the budget is distributed to the highest-performing ads. Any unused funds will be shifted to the next month's budget.

**Introduction/Background**

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the world, and the hospitality industry is no exception. COVID-19 has shifted the lens on how companies conduct meetings and events. Industry-leading companies like Netflix, Apple, Google, and Slack are leading the charge of this pivot to embrace a hybrid-first mentality. A recent McKinsey survey suggests that up to 90% of companies will adopt a hybrid approach to meetings post pandemic (McKinsey & Co. 2021). This new meeting model provides an opportunity for hotels to go after companies that were once out of reach due to meeting and event size, or location. The hybrid-meeting model also supports companies that have taken a more socially-responsible approach to business in the past few years. Consumers want companies to “walk the talk,” and lead sustainability initiatives by example instead of simply writing a check (Riston 2020). This agile meeting option is also cost effective and supports hotels looking to combat pandemic losses. Hotels like the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess can lock down this potential segment by becoming *the* most-desired destination for hybrid meetings.

To connect with decision makers in the industry, the Fairmont should build relationships on the social media platforms that event planners engage with daily: platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter allow the Fairmont to communicate its values, such as sustainability, diversity and inclusion, and brand trust. In fact, 64 percent of customers who expressed loyalty to a given brand did so because they shared its values (BrandTrust, 2018). Brand trust fosters loyalty among followers and affords the Fairmont the opportunity to engage with potential customers one on one, which is something the brand can’t do on traditional media channels like print or television. Social media is a unique way to leverage personalized messaging with the ability to target any industry decision makers with a low cost, high-impact marketing model.

Fairmont’s most important need at this time is to establish authority as a hybrid meeting industry leader in order to make the needed connections with company meeting/event planners, procure RFP leads, and compete with other destination meeting markets. On the west coast in particular, the Fairmont is competing against destinations like Las Vegas, Nevada, Denver, Colorado, and San Diego, California. Many of the same Fortune 500 companies the Fairmont would look to target have chosen these locations based on the ability to accommodate large groups and the variety of bleisure attractions offered. The Scottsdale-Phoenix region offers an array of excursions and with an established hybrid-meeting event package, the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess is well positioned to compete in this market.

**Socially and Environmentally Positive Values**

As part of the AccorHotel family, Farimont’s success is built on a code of values. Fairmont’s mission of sustainability, and diversity and inclusion, echoes its mission statement that the “hospitality of tomorrow is rooted in human values,” (AccorHotels, 2022). This can be considered a form of brand activism in which brands “take a stand on social, environmental, or political issues,” (Duarte, 2020). A 2018 survey reveals that “64% of consumers would reward firms that they see as engaged in some kind of activism,” (Duarte, 2020).

The Fairmont has focused on sustainability while executing its mission for unforgettable experiences since joining Planet 21. This pledge focuses on addressing reforestation, water conservation, energy savings and food waste reduction. It also requires everyone – guests, hotel colleagues, partners, and property developers – to take measurable actions to minimize environmental impact on the planet. The Fairmont Hotel has continued to promote long-term sustainability and stewardship in the community by working with forward-thinking companies and encouraging their guests to support these efforts during their stays. For example, guests that drive an eco-friendly vehicle are rewarded with free parking. Additionally, companies that host hybrid meetings receive a discount to encourage sustainable meeting practices.

Additionally, in a recent survey by the World Travel and Tourism Council, 58% of respondents are now more concerned with environmental and sustainability practices than they were in 2020 (Pheedloop, 2022). Further, hybrid meetings can cut waste that traditional in-person meetings/events generate. It is estimated that in a 5,000 person event, 62% of the materials are thrown out at the end of the event (Pheedloop, 2022). This affords the Fairmont the opportunity to brand itself as a socially-responsible company that hosts hybrid meetings and events to not just “look good,” but actually reduce environmental impact.

**In-Depth Market Research**

The shutdowns from the COVID-19 pandemic most severely affected conferences, weddings, and vacations that were forced to be put on hold or canceled altogether. As we move into a world with ongoing COVID-19 spikes and dips, the hospitality industry has struggled to find its footing again. In 2021, there was growth in transient travel exceeding 2019 levels as consumers that had been stuck at home began to get out and travel again. Additionally, the new work landscape has changed dramatically with more companies embracing remote first and contract workers than ever before.

COVID-19 has also shifted the lens on how companies conduct meetings, nudging them toward a more inclusive approach to their corporate meeting and events strategy. This means taking steps to ensure that everyone has a similar meeting experience with equal opportunities to contribute: regardless of where they are joining from, what personal challenges they may have, or what type of employee they are, such as remote first.

Additionally, the merging of business and leisure has changed how employees and their employers think about travel: we no longer live to work but work to live. When looking into work trips, employees want to get a little rest and relaxation along with reconnecting with their teams (Laufik, 2022).

This new mindset along with new technologies, have made destination meetings even more attractive to companies than ever before. This opens up a marketplace for hotels like Fairmont to leverage their unique destination, socially-responsible practices and technological advances to entice these Fortune 500 companies away from destinations like Las Vegas, Nevada, Denver, Colorado, and San Diego, California.

However, competing with these established destinations is not the only challenge with adapting a hybrid-meeting model. The four biggest challenges this pivot poses are complexity, engagement, personalization, and ROI. Putting on a meeting or event is challenging for large companies like Apple or Netflix, so even smaller companies find it more difficult to manage the need for multiple technological systems, and their related costs. Generating engagement for attendees is also difficult enough when all attendees meet in person. Thus, the problem becomes executing meetings and events that are engaging, inclusive, and rewarding for both those in person and remote. Especially when those attending remotely only have breakout rooms for a more intimate, 1:1 experience. Lastly, the hybrid model needs to support industry-wide meetings and conferences, and not just individualized, company-wide meetings and events. This is especially important if the goal is to generate enough revenue to make investing in the capabilities and experiences of a hybrid model worth it.

To tackle these challenges, the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess should focus on the opportunities that set it apart from the competition. Firstly, the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess already owns state of the art AV technology. This means that the Fairmont does not have to invest in the technology, and subsequently charge more for their events, or reserving third-party, AV services. Unlike hotels in competing cities, this allows the Fairmont to be more agile in pricing its services to fit the given company’s needs. And with a lower cost, the Fairmont has the ability to offer lower prices for attendees while still bringing in significant revenue from the event.

Already having in-house technology also provides the benefit of supporting both large and small meetings and events. The Fairmont has the ability to seamlessly stream and engage remote attendees on one monitor, engage in-person attendees on another, and display any presenter on a third monitor, all while having controls for all three monitors on a single platform. The Fairmont sales team can provide effortless meeting planning in this online platform as well, which includes sign-ups for networking, managing attendee profiles, and livestreams of the meeting or event on social media platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn. The hosting company can also choose add ons such as gamification elements. These include trivia games, bingo, or brain teasers for both in-person and remote attendees. Additionally, the Fairmont can coordinate sending the same “swag” bags to remote and in-person attendees when they sign up for the event. This establishes event cohesiveness and will help remote attendees feel more connected to the event from wherever they are. Additionally, this leaves less for the participating company to tackle on their end so they can enjoy the event experience with more of the bleisure feel.

**Customer Persona**

Fairmont’s buyer persona was created from industry netnography, interviews with working meeting planners and hotel sales managers, and social media polls. However, since we only interviewed three individuals, and our polls only generated 20 responses, it is worth noting that the data is overall not statistically significant for all event planners or the entire industry. However, that information was taken into consideration when crafting the profile for “Event Emery.” Event Emery is a 37-year-old college graduate with a bachelor’s degree in marketing or hospitality and a concentration in communications. According to Zippia, this is the most common major of event planners (2022). The age range of those interviewed was between 30-40 years old, which is also around the average age of event planners (37) according to Zippia (2022). Event Emery’s primary language is English, but they also speak Spanish fluently as 70% of event planners speak Spanish, and Hispanic/Latino was the second most common ethnicity of event planners according to Zippia (2022). Furthermore, the most recent U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) found that California, the hub for most of these Fortune 500 tech companies, has the highest population of Hispanic/Latinx individuals in the country at over 100,000 (2021). Thus, it is likely that event planners like Emery, or potential attendees of events at the Fairmont, would have some degree of fluency in Spanish. Emery’s annual salary is $51K, as this was the average salary of event planners according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), but in our IDIs, we found salaries could range from $35,000 to nearly $75,000 on the higher end for more experienced professionals.

When researching destination sites, Event Emery looks at several different media assets to ensure that the destination aligns with their meeting goals. As a Millennial, Event Emery was introduced to technology in their youth, and is now a part of the largest work cohort in the country. This means they are digitally savvy and can easily acquire new technological skills (Cheng, 2019). Websites and social media platforms like Twitter or LinkedIn are the ideal sites when it comes to connecting with venues, partners, or clients for their depth and breadth of reach. Filters on LinkedIn, and lists on Twitter, allow Emery to search for the exact type of meeting planners they want to engage with. Additionally, they can look at location, event space, technology options, and brand values when shopping for a location. As a Millennial, their personal values such as sustainability and diversity and inclusion also play a part in their recommendations to superiors. According to Forbes, 79% of Millennial employees are loyal to companies that care about their effect on society. Millennials are also curious and tend to make buying decisions based on how socially conscious companies seem to be based on their social media profiles (Cheng, 2019). Post pandemic, “People are more and more conscious of the things they buy and the companies behind them….People will support the companies that do the right thing,” and meeting/event planners will look at potential venues in the same light (Debevoise, 2020).

Fairmont’s social media messaging must reflect the core items that meeting planners like Event Emery are in search of. Thus, it is essential that each platform’s posts reflect desired user behaviors: socially and environmentally conscious, diverse and inclusive, and technologically advanced and equipped. Understanding Fairmont's audience and reflecting on their values is what will attract more event planners to the Fairmont than other potential meeting locations.

**Your Strategy**

In order to establish the Fairmont as a leader in hybrid-meetings, we will create a three-month promotional plan on social media that can be altered and repeated to target different companies. We selected this timeframe because 16 weeks prior to the event is the best time to start promoting an event according to EventBrite (2016). Our two main goals of the campaign will be to bolster brand trust through community engagement, and to obtain one new Fortune 500 company every event cycle to use the Fairmont’s hybrid-meeting services. The key performance indicators (KPIs) for the former will be to acquire 500 new followers per month and to receive at least 80 comments on each social post per month, to increase unique website visitors by 30% each month, and to communicate directly with fifteen qualified leads per month.

We will leverage both organic social content and paid social content on Twitter and LinkedIn. Beginning with organic, we will create a content calendar to post 2 to 3 times/week. Week “A” will be one post about an excursion such as off-roading on Jeeps, with a link to a blog post about this activity on the Fairmont’s site. The caption for the post could be something like “Sorry, off-line for off-roading.” The other will be a poll about what the user “needs” today. This could be a meal at one of the restaurants on property, a golf outing, or a day at the Well & Being Spa. Polls are effective because they require minimal effort from the user, but spark interest and engagement. It appears that the company wants to hear from the user and what they need, which is essential for a customer-centric approach (Dubey, 2022).

While the purpose of Week A will be to show the amenities of the property and what a trip to the hotel includes, Week B will highlight past events and unique benefits to the Fairmont such as weddings, corporate retreats, and sustainability. One day will feature a photo of the event with the names of those participating like, “Josh and Andrew met in Kansas, so they chose some Kansas City BBQ for their rehearsal dinner!” This provides the opportunity to showcase different people, places, and events. According to the Content Marketing Institute, people want to see more than one type of person and voice in online content (Gynn, 2020), and highlighting an LGBTQ couple in a wedding post is a subtle way to show that the Fairmont caters to all people. The other post in Week B will be a poll about hybrid-events or sustainability with a question such as, “How many gallons of water does the Fairmont use in one day?” The next day would be a follow-up post about how the Fairmont is pivoting to attack this problem, such as with the installation of energy-efficient appliances.

Now, while the overall themes of bleisure activities, diversity and inclusion, and sustainability initiatives will be the same for strategy cohesion on Twitter and LinkedIn, the execution will be different. This is because the content should be tailored to reflect each platform’s nuances. For example, Twitter is much more casual and “fun” compared to LinkedIn. According to iFocus Marketing, posting the same content on all platforms can also come across as repetitive and lazy which creates negative brand association (2020). To accommodate these differences, we will post or schedule posts for the best times on each platform: 8:00 AM on Mondays and Thursdays for Twitter and 9:00 AM on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for LinkedIn (Hootsuite, 2021). We will also adjust copy to be more formal and extended on LinkedIn, and more short and sweet on Twitter. This caters to LinkedIn’s professional space with the ability to type more, and Twitter’s more casual space and limiting 140 characters. And since we are also looking to attract a multilingual audience, we know that posts in native languages are imperative. According to Hootsuite, 70% of people require information in their native language to make a sound purchasing decision. Thus, we will use Twitter language tools to display posts in multiple languages, and target our audience based on language settings. LinkedIn supports 23 languages, so we can set the Fairmont’s profile to accommodate the Spanish language so posts are displayed in the user’s set language, rather than the poster’s language. Each part of this strategy opens up the possibility to connect more personally with users.

On the paid side of the campaign, we will run three types of targeted ads on Twitter: Promoted Tweets, Promoted Accounts, and Promoted Trends. Promoted Tweet ads will target meeting professionals by way of popular hashtags. Promoted Account ads will target the Fortune 500 companies as well as overlapping audiences between them. Promoted Trends ads will promote hybrid meetings and events for popular locations that are Tweeted about or the user Tweets from. These would be our areas of competition: Las Vegas, Denver, and San Diego.

Similarly, LinkedIn will run text ads to target meeting planners and decision makers at Fortune 500 companies like Apple, Google, and Netflix. Inbox messages will also be used with a sponsored, personalized message in their inbox with a CTA that links to the Fairmont’s lead form. This is unique to LinkedIn and offers a way to build relationships with meeting planners if they want to respond, and not bother those who are not interested as they can simply delete or filter out the pending requests.

Lastly, we will use Google & Bing display and PPC ads to target meeting planners that have search queries for our three competing locations– Las Vegas, Denver, and San Diego. These ads will also target keywords like “meetings,” “events,” “hybrid meetings,” “sustainable meetings,” and “conference venues,” to name a few. We will make these dynamic ads which rotate the most popular ones to be viewed first for a better investment.

In order for both the paid and organic sides of the campaign to be successful, the team would need to assemble a bank of photos for bleisure activities and hotel amenities. The people in these photos would need to be identified and contacted for approval to post. This would ideally be done a month before the launch of the campaign for month one’s posts. We would also need to establish a list of fact-checked information pertaining to sustainability and climate change. This could likely be done by one person on the sales and marketing team. For added convenience, a scheduling tool such as one from Hubspot can allow for posts to be scheduled and checked during work hours. Lastly, we could leverage a tool such as Brandwatch to monitor sentiment, and add the owned component of a social media strategy. We could set up alerts for terms such as “Fairmont,” “Hotel,” “Events,” “Hybrid,” “Scottsdale,” and “Arizona.” This is important because we can capitalize on positive brand mentions, and intervene in cases of negative brand mentions. According to Niel Patel, “Each dissatisfied contact has the potential for becoming your company’s best advertisement, a key referral source, and a stealth undercover operative – if you are willing to listen.” Investing in a social listening tool like Brandwatch can keep Fairmont ahead of this curve.

**Bigger Picture**
 Reaching meeting/event planners through digital marketing can often be a challenge so a multichannel approach is needed to engage this target audience through their preferred communication channels. Email is an important tool for meeting planners, and 80% of planners say it is their preferred method of communication (Destinations International, 2022). Fairmont will use email to promote special offers, highlight unique destination features, and capture RFP leads “through authentic representation of what people have signed up for,” (Stratten & Stratten, 2016). Additionally, a CRM list will be generated from custom paid social media ads to engage meeting/event planners that were interested enough to search for event types and locations that match the services offered at the Fairmont.

 To reach this new potential market, paid display, PPC ads, retargeting ads, and social media paid ads will play the largest part of this digital marketing strategy. Paid display ads offer the Fairmont the opportunity to advertise on websites that meeting planners engage with on a daily basis such as Cvent, Saber, and YouTube. This puts the Fairmont in the minds of decision makers at an early stage in the buying process. The key to success with any digital advertising is the direction of the call to action (CTA). The fewer the clicks the user takes to gain the needed information they are searching for, the bigger the conversion. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to ensure the landing page on the Fairmont site, and CTA links support the messaging in the ad and the desired action. It is also imperative that the ads are optimized for mobile because if it misses the “mark, even a little, you'll miss whatever opportunity you might have had,” and not all decision makers will use a desktop to search for locations (Panel®, 2020).

PPC ads will also provide a keyword targeted approach to reaching these meeting/event planners. Using geolocation-based keywords like “Las Vegas,” “Denver,” or “San Diego,” will allow the Fairmont to appear as a search result for these competing markets while meeting planners begin to consider venues, or evaluate alternatives. Retargeting will be another way to bring interested meeting planners back to the website. Traffic that was directed to the website through these ads, but failed to complete the desired action (such as filling out a form for event services) can be redirected back to the Fairmont site through subsequent ads and cookies. Then, this can be reinforced through social media. This channel offers paid media targeting, destination research, and company values to display through organic content all in one place. Through Fairmont’s social media, the hotel can post messages that highlight the company’s core values like sustainability, and diversity and inclusion. The Fairmont can showcase the unique aspects of its location that align with what meeting planners are searching for, and why choosing this destination over others in the west would be beneficial to the given company. Social media marketing also allows the Fairmont to “keep an eye on the competition, because if you don’t, they’ll get the upper hand,” (Hootsuite, 2021).

 A platform like Twitter allows the Fairmont to leverage hashtags that meeting/event planners use in their searches or what hashtags the competition is using that can be integrated into Fairmont’s posts to increase reach with shared audiences. LinkedIn offers additional opportunities to reach these event planners as it is a heavily used tool in their planning and networking efforts. LinkedIn also has the ability to drill down paid ad, targeted audiences to include only meeting/event planners or decision makers, by industry, company, and size with sponsored posts that offer the right imaging, messaging, and direct CTAs needed to engage this segment. Additionally, LinkedIn offers inbox advertising which is not available on any other social media platform. The Fairmont can target meeting/event planners with a direct message placed in their inbox on LinkedIn and personalize the message to their company so from the first touchpoint, to the last, the strategy is unified and hits the right mark.

**Key Issues**

As previously stated, the hybrid model is forecasted for immense growth, and the hospitality market is still recovering from the pandemic. The main strength of the Fairmont is that it already possesses the AV equipment necessary to host these events. In terms of location, Las Vegas has a more exciting nightlife, which may make it more appealing to a younger audience. According to Business Insider, most employees in the Big 5 of tech are in their late 20s (Pelisson and Hartmans, 2017). Thus, the Fairmont must ensure it caters to the nightlife scene in its social media and online content. This could come by way of featuring restaurants, clubs, and a lively on-property scene in order to effectively sell its bleisure experience to a younger audience. San Diego is also the closest in location to the Big 5 in tech, which are based in Silicon Valley. Even as vaccines are made widely available, consumers still experience travel anxiety. This may increase in future months as masked mandates are rolled back on public transportation (Stone and Godoy, 2022).

Furthermore, in a study conducted by Danni Zhengab, Qiuju Luo, and Brent W. Ritchie, it is stated that, “COVID-19 has generated an unprecedented level of public fear, likely impeding tourism industry recovery long after the pandemic is over,” (2020). Thus, it will be important for the Fairmont to emphasize the fact it is within a six-hour drive from the Silicon Valley area if participants do not wish to fly. Additionally, focusing on contactless check-in/check-out, cleaning procedures, and the vaccine requirement for employees will be important to include in the digital campaigns to reassure guests that the Fairmont is prioritizing the health and safety of its guests. Social ads displaying the hybrid component will also be helpful in addressing concerns, as the copy could reflect the additional benefit of letting attendees join from home if health concerns spike travel anxiety.

The Fairmont does an excellent job of responding to potential guests' concerns via social media comments and replies at present. If a user had a question about how the hotel is handling COVID-19, or if they required special accommodations, the Fairmont could intervene in the consideration phase of the buying journey. By answering their questions, the Fairmont not only gets a better idea of guests’ pain points, but can move along a potential guest in the purchasing process, by establishing itself as an informed and compassionate brand that wants to serve its guests.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess is positioned to take market share in hybrid events. A customer-centric approach to social media campaigns on Twitter and LinkedIn, focusing on diversity and inclusion and sustainability will entice Millennial meeting planners looking for a west coast location to host bleisure events. Competitors may have had advantages in location or amenities, but a post-pandemic shift in the needs of potential attendees, along with the desire of Fortune 500 company meeting planners to cater to those needs, affords the Fairmont the opportunity to win this segment. This can be done through a strong social media presence anchored in personalized, targeted content and engaging with potential guests one on one. The key to success will also come by staying true to the company’s core values: catering to all potential guests, and putting their needs first.

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