

Hospitality Branding: Expressing the Brand Through Design and Transferable Experiences



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Abstract A brand is a powerful corporate asset. A brand is much more than a name or logo. A brand, while a representation of personality, refers to the values, and experiences of its customers and the way the brand is perceived by the public and client. Design is an obvious and practical way for organizations to make their products and services more distinctive (Best, K.: Design Management. (2016).). The branding process and brand position are important factors for differentiating a brand in the market. In turn, brand identity is a crucial element of communication with the public. We are emotional beings. We like stories and stories are important to how we as humans understand the world around us. Stories make us feel good, make us explore the senses and revive memories. Stories activate brain and body regions and stimulate emotional and biological brain responses that encourage sharing experiences. The human ability to recall a story increases, as it becomes incorporated into sensory areas. Strong emotions and feelings retain more vivid and lasting memories. Brands should be able to tell stories capturing the public's attention, stimulate empathy and create emotional connections that move the public in their actions and attitudes. A brand story needs to resonate with potential consumers and form a strong bond and loyalty moving forward. The best stories stimulate action by offering our mind simulation (knowledge about how to act) along with inspiration (motivation to act). Hospitality branding uses stories to build empathy with the public and the public with the brand. The development of an emotional brand culture allows for greater connection with the public and therefore a greater loyalty to it (Aaker in *Managing Brand Equity*, The Free Press, New York, 1991). Combining brand strategy with consistent brand communication and storytelling—the good narrative is with the brand's vision, mission, and corporate culture—with extensive knowledge of the brand's sector, it offers innovative and differentiating design solutions. This, in turn, will be a lever of creativity that applies the design and the brand to create different experiences for its audience and brand followers.

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Keywords Brand strategy · Visual identity · Visual communication · Customer experience · Immersive experience

1 Hospitality Branding

1.1 Brand-Led Emotional Experiences

Hospitality branding “is the collection of elements that express your unique value proposition to each potential client. It encompasses aesthetic features such as logos and color schemes and the ideals, values, and type of experience that clients expect from you.” [1]. According to one study¹ developed by scholars focusing on sustainable luxury brands and products, the hospitality industry clearly dominates in parallel with the fashion industry. Since the fashion industry is “the second largest cause of pollution worldwide” [2].

Design Management offers strategies to design products and service development, from the initial research [3] until desirable by the customers. Aligning brand values and brand beliefs to images of lifestyle.

As a design-led and decision-making process, customers are at the center of the business offer and design process. Firstly, the role of design in business is to help to create a brand aligned with the mission and vision, visually and experientially. Furthermore, develop products and services that address the needs and ambitions of the customers.

Empathy is a method that allows the design team to know about customers’ needs and ambitions. Brands operate in the “emotional territory of people’s hearts and minds” [4]. Providing customer experiences through emotional experiences. The brand experience went even further when aligned with consistent brand communication.

A brand communicates to the public. A brand conveys its key ideas, personality, promises, purpose, aspirations, and corporate values to the public through visual representations. One of its main objectives is to transform the public into potential customers, and customers into brand ambassadors. The stronger, more targeted, and more effective this narrative is, the more likely the product or service will be successful.

A strong brand strategy transforms assets, making them more livable, more visible, more inspiring and in turn valuable. Developing a brand strategy with that end goal in mind is critically important. Customers’ experience extends beyond a large room and large and comfortable bed. It is an integral part of consistent and continuous brand communication.

Strategy typically focuses on outcomes and sustainability, whereas design is often concerned with the process of creating those outcomes. Despite this distinction,

¹ Springer–Business Research (2020) 13:541–601.

it is possible to align design with business strategy using measurable tools. By establishing a common language, businesses can facilitate effective communication between their design and strategy teams, ultimately resulting in a more cohesive approach to achieving organizational goals [5].

Through the use of metrics and other quantifiable measures, businesses can assess the impact of design decisions on their overall strategy. This not only ensures that design decisions are aligned with business goals but also provides a framework for evaluating the success of those decisions.

In essence, a measurable approach to design helps bridge the gap between strategy and design by providing a common language that enables effective communication and collaboration between the two. This ultimately leads to better outcomes and increased sustainability, as design decisions are made with a clear understanding of their impact on the broader business strategy.

Brand communication needs consistently communicate brand personality. Communicate brand personality is like tell a story. A story is not just a series of facts, but a narrative with a clear purpose to capture the audience interest in the most effective way possible. And nothing captures our interests more than a question, what happens next? The story has a beginning, a middle and an end. The story needs to be share with the right language and channel. Furthermore, storytelling is not just about telling literal narratives, but about evoking a feeling, and emotions, and creating empathy.

Creating the right brand language and signature elements with a brand-focused approach sharing its DNA with a deep understanding of the values, attitudes and behavior of the target customer to create strong customer emotional connection and loyalty.

1.2 Enhancing the Customer Experience in the Hospitality Industry

Brand loyalty is described as a behavioral response and as a function of psychological processes [6]. A customer-first approach is paramount to success in hospitality branding. Customer satisfaction and happiness are always a core goal and the first commitment. Customers purchase products and services based on emotions and their desire for the experiences.

The connection between our emotions and our experiences is an important aspect of hospitality branding. By understanding the role that emotions play in shaping our experiences, hospitality brands can work to create more meaningful connections with guests and build a stronger, more positive reputation over time.

In the hospitality industry, happy guests will generate two critical phenomena that are directly linked to word-of-mouth referrals: more memorable, create trust and an emotional connection. Brand and design decisions should be made in conscience with the responsibility a brand and its products have. Promising a comfortable, valuable,

and unique experience for the customers is one of the main goals of the brand. It is fundamental to work on the relationships between the brand and the customer to deliver the brand's vision.

Consistency helps to bridge trust. Consistency in design has a huge influence on customer experience. As designers, we need to ensure the customers received the same message at any given touchpoint. Design strategies can increase the customer experience by exploring initiatives that go through listening to the customer's voice.

Stories as part of the brand strategy talk about the mission, brand values, the brand relationship with customers, and brand social initiatives related to sustainability and well-being.

Brand and design strategies significantly increase the likelihood of the guest's connection to the brand and in turn the likelihood of a long-term relationship with the brand, when aligned with the needs and ambitions of its guests. Brand communication should be consistent and focus on guest experiences and loyalty. The first step toward loyalty begins with the customer's becoming aware of the product [7] and brands need to provide open channels for brand relationships with the customer to enhance brand loyalty. For a clear and open communication process, brands need to be sure all touchpoints are strategically aligned. Consistent experiences build trust. And as your organization grows and you add more and more features and elements to your product, this becomes harder and harder to keep a handle on.

2 Hotel Brand Sector

2.1 *Cities as Ecosystems of Hospitality Brands and Social Well-Being*

Urban centers are developed by people for people. And cities are human-constructed environments designed to cater to the needs and ambitions of their inhabitants. These environments offer diverse experiences and opportunities for the creation of personal memories. Regardless of the degree of cosmopolitan character, cities are prepared to receive human populations and offer access to a range of products and services for their use and enjoyment.

The displacement of people makes the hospitality sector invest more and more in brand recognition through customer relationships and the emotional experiences they can provide. This practice, in a chain, helps to increase the quality of life in cities by bringing more tourists.

Hotels are part of the city's ecosystems. The hotel belongs first to the place where it is built, and then to the people that will work and stay in it.

The covid-19 pandemic had a huge impact on the hotel industry. Beyond the negatively influencing of an extremely saturated market, was the need to adapt to the new challenges and measures imposed by the market and healthy organizations.

During COVID, the hotel industry has taken extreme measures to ensure their guests were safe, tested and comfortable during the entire service experience.

The big challenge for hospitality brands was to retain customers and make the way for new customers and guests. Society relearned to socialize face-to-face after a long period of restrictions and human physical interactions.

Health and sanitation concerns emotionally affected how customers buy a hotel product or service and as guests, how they experience it. Drastic hotel occupancy limits have dampened ambitions for many, and hotels started rethinking their products and services to provide safe and happy experiences to customers.

Likewise, it became necessary to rethink the services and brand strategies to create new and meaningful stories reinforcing the well-being and safe experiences provided by hotels in a post-covid era.

3 Sustainable Luxury

3.1 Sustainability and Luxury in Hospitality

Hospitality is one of the largest consumers of resources such as energy, water, and other natural resources. And consumers are becoming more conscious of their environmental impact and are looking for companies that align with their values. Hospitality brands that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability can improve their reputation and appeal to environmentally conscious customers.

Additionally, governments and other entities and NGOs around the world are implementing regulations aimed at reducing the environmental impact of industries, including the hospitality sector. By adopting sustainable practices, hospitality brands can ensure they comply with these regulations and avoid potential penalties.

The luxury sector has been constantly growing. Luxury products and services have attracted the interest of many. From a social perspective, the luxury industry through mass products to a broad scope has a big chance to create connections between luxury and corporate social responsibility² (CSR) and sustainability.

Luxury experience goes beyond material things, it is about spirituality and balance [8]. The values linked to sustainable luxury and the perception of eco products, circular systems or sustainable practices as part of the luxury experience are topics hospitality brands need to be aware of as they have a significant impact on brand reputation and loyalty implications.

How far is a sustainable luxury experience from a luxury and consumerism experience?

Sustainability and luxury in the hospitality industry refers to the integration of environmentally friendly and socially responsible practices into the operations and culture of luxury hotels, resorts, and other types of hospitality businesses. This can

² Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a company's commitment to strive for profitability whilst acting as a good citizen (Freeman and Velamuri 2006),

include many actions and tactics by reducing energy and water usage, implementing waste reduction and recycling programs, sourcing sustainable food and products, and offering eco-friendly amenities and activities for guests.

Nowadays talking about luxury is not only referring to a single product or service but relates to creating desirable moments with a focus on corporate social responsibility and sustainability [9]. The compatibility between luxury and sustainability is a paradox of consumerism, as the sustainable development has become persistent problem for luxury brands [10]. In the current business landscape, sustainable development has emerged as a pivotal issue for all business. Even the luxury industry, has become a focal point in discussions about sustainability. This is because luxury represents a form of consumption that prioritizes motivations beyond functionality [4].

Beyond the moment we walk into the luxury hotel lobby, a Michelin star restaurant, or a business flight company, we appreciate every single detail about the interior design, the colors and the textures inside the room, the service, even the sound and smell of the place. The way we see and perceive those elements is fundamental to create a customer brand image and in consequence brand loyalty. However, there is so much more to how you feel than what you see.

By embracing sustainability, luxury hotels can enhance their reputation and attract guests who are increasingly conscious about the impact of their travel on the environment and their social responsibility to protect the planet for future generations.

The hotel industry has a major impact on sustainability “due to its consumption of natural resources, its effect on the environment, and its economic and social impact on the communities in which such establishments are located” [11]. On the other hand, more than ever, consumers search for information about hotels’ sustainability, as they are more aware of sustainability global concerns and global procedures.

Balancing sustainability and luxury can be challenging, as some guests may have different expectations and perceptions of what constitutes luxury. However, incorporate sustainability into their branding efforts, highlighting their commitment to environmental and social responsibility should be part of their overall offering and to provide guests with an exceptional experience while also reducing the negative impact of tourism on the environment and local communities.

Hospitality brands need to be aware and brand strategy should include tactics and activities to increase their footprint and the planet’s responsibility. It is time to implement sustainability and circularity, in the operations and brand strategy.

The study [11] about sustainability and hospitality developed in 2020 provides crucial information for hotel managers and for society which stands to benefit if this sector improves its environmental, social, and economic performance. The paper shows consumers WTPM³ in luxury hospitality when businesses are values-driven or more conscious about sustainability and impactful practices. On the other side, it shows how the hotel industry could establish brand operation strategies to retain more responsible consumers in improving their sustainability practices.

³ Willingness to pay more for green products.

Hospitality brands must prioritize sustainable practices in their operations, such as minimizing waste, conserving energy, and reducing carbon emissions. This can be achieved through the adoption of eco-friendly technologies and materials, as well as the implementation of sustainable supply chain practices. On the other hand, hospitality brands can communicate their commitment to sustainability through their branding efforts. This includes incorporating sustainability into their marketing campaigns, showcasing their sustainable practices on their website and social media platforms, and partnering with sustainability-focused organizations to demonstrate their dedication to responsible business practices.

3.2 Soneva Fushi Eco-Resort. A Success Story

The Maldives is a coral island nation located in the Indian Ocean. Spanning 600 miles with 26 atolls, which are made up of more than 1,000 coral islands, 200 of which are inhabited by local populations while the remaining 120 are reserved exclusively for tourist resorts [12].

The Maldives faces several challenges, including climate change and rising sea levels, which threaten its low-lying islands. The country has taken steps to address these challenges, including setting ambitious targets for renewable energy and working with international partners on climate adaptation measures.

Soneva Fushi (Fig. 1) is an eco-resort located in the Baa Atoll, Kunfunadhoo Island, one of the largest islands in the Maldives. Set in 1995 the resort is situated on a UNESCO-protected ‘Biosphere Reserve’ meaning flora, fauna and sea life all feel completely uncompromised by the constant human interaction with the island, in fact.

As an example of how luxury brand strategy can be aligned with sustainability and planet responsibility, they have been reducing their environmental impact and increasing biodiversity, implementing sustainable and circular practices all over the years.

According to Soneva’s Sustainability Achievements in 2019, the Soneva group banned imported bottled water in 2008 and filters, mineralises, alkalises and bottles its water on-site. Based on the same source, Soneva “has averted the production of 1,500,000 plastic bottles in the last 10 years by using reusable glass bottles. A percentage of revenues from Soneva Water funds over 500 clean water projects in more than 50 countries. It provides clean water to over 750,000 via charities such as Water Charity and Thirst Aid.”

The eco-resort has developed a sustainable and circular system called “Eco Centro Waste to Wealth”. Following the circular principles to Reduce—Reuse—Recycle, it turns most waste into value and nutrients for the soil, such as compost. Soneva Fushi’s main objective was to challenge peoples’ perception of waste and tackle waste issues on an island like the Maldives [12].



Fig. 1 Soneva Fushi. Eco-resort is situated in the Maldives (*Source* The air design)

In 2015 the resort brought a new glass recycling centre, “which blows fresh glass tumblers for Soneva Fushi and Soneva Jani, and even invites master glassblowers to create one-of-a-kind pieces of art” [13] (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Soneva Fushi’s art and glass studio, launched in 2015 [14]

The eco-resort has been building collaboration with Makers' Place as the British artist Alexander James Hamilton,⁴ founder of the Distil Ennui Studio™. The artist is an advocate for sustainability at a community, island, and governmental level for over 35 years. He is a passionate ambassador for circular design, "his art engages with the broader public sphere through interventions within natural landscapes and civic spaces alike, arts education, policymaking, issues of sustainability and ecocide" [13].

"Scientific research findings suggest that sustainability has become an element of quality expected by luxury customers" [15]. Designing models of cooperation for luxury experiences also provide responsible and sustainable practices within the hotel industry and other entities to drive real change. That means more and better cooperation with civil society, public entities, NGOs, and the private sector to collaborate, is needed.

To ensure resilience in hotels and hotel groups, a systemic change approach is needed. Design managers and business leaders are responsible for innovating and developing processes and best practices to offer sustainable, environmentally, and socially impactful brand solutions. They always need to work together through a systemic way of thinking. Incorporating circularity before engaging with suppliers, purchases from bio-based and locally sourced suppliers, and plastic alternatives. And in addition, benefits local communities and the environment.

4 Brand Identity and Hospitality

4.1 *Creating Hospitality Brands Through Consistent Brand Identity*

One of the principal offerings within the hospitality industry is the hotel. As a brand, a hotel serves as a symbol of its unique identity and, as a group, it encompasses a collective of shared characteristics and values under a unified brand umbrella. The perception and evaluation of a hotel by its customers are continuously influenced by the mental and emotional connections established with its branding. The branding of a hotel encompasses the visual representation and image that the hotel conveys to its guests or customers.

A brand strategy needs to be clear on the branding, and whom it aims to serve, and most importantly, gain a clear understanding of what makes it unique. Just at the beginning of the process, designers should have a clear understanding of the brand's mission, vision, and values to ensure the brand identity will be aligned with the customer's goals and ambitions.

Brand designers are storytellers. They can tell a brand story through visuals and create brand concept options supported by research. Designers have the skills and

⁴ Sculpture, painting, photography, film, lighting and installation.

background and a clear understanding of the business to conduct a hospitality brand identity program align with the brand purpose and target audience.

Brand identity includes a group of components that comprise hotel branding. There are some aspects designers need to consider when creating a Brand Identity: consistency, authenticity, and the ability to communicate the mission, vision and brand corporate culture through visual references all over the brand touchpoints.

Brands need to have a straight relationship between satisfaction and brand loyalty. One of the first steps in maintaining customer brand loyalty is to build and sustain a positive brand image. A strong brand image is important to brand owners because the brand name distinguishes a product from the competitor's products. Brand image should be a truthful, enlightening, insightful and beautiful message to eye-catch customer attention.

Design management is linked to design, innovation, and technology to provide a competitive advantage across economic, social/cultural, and environmental factors. Design management empowers design to enhance collaboration and synergy between "design" and "business" improving design effectiveness.

The scope of design management ranges from tactical management of corporate design functions and strategies across the organization as a key differentiator and driver of brand success [16].

Design management refers to the continuous processes, strategic decisions, and business practices that facilitate innovation and the creation of well-designed products, services, communications, environments, and brands. The aim of design management is to improve the quality of life for individuals while also achieving organizational success.

Moreover, design management involves the utilization of effective communication channels, teamwork, and leadership to ensure that design processes run smoothly and efficiently. By aligning design efforts with broader business objectives, design management supports both organizational success and the enhancement of individual quality of life.

The design process to develop a brand identity is a systemic process, as it combines different areas to cover the "ongoing processes, business decisions, and strategies that enable innovation and create effectively-designed products, services, communications, environments, and brands that enhance our quality of life and provide organizational success" [17].

As a systemic process it follows a series of design activities, using methods and tools along the four main stages: understanding, ideation, concept development and delivery. And to ensure the collection of elements express a brand unique value proposition to each potential customer.

A brand identity aims to create shared value and build long-term relationships, creating a meaningful role in customers' lives. And consistency is key and brand purpose aligns customer needs with the brand offer and the emotional experience. There are some key advantages to having a brand purpose: brand purpose adds value to society as a whole; it helps to build an emotional relationship between a brand and its consumer (brand loyalty); a unique brand purpose can differentiate the brand from competitors,

The brand purpose is more than, making a profit or driving shareholder value. The higher reason for being a brand is to exist. Furthermore, brand purpose engages customers through living brand experiences, creating ecosystems to make people's lives better. For example, what makes the Nike brand personality so unique, is that the company can appeal to almost anyone that wants the best, the company can attract almost everyone who wants the best and anticipates the customer experience by highlighting human strengths: "To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world. If you have a body, you are an athlete."⁵

A Brand Identity includes the visual aspect of the brand such as logos, symbol, visual system including the color schemes and typography rules but also the values and type of experience that customers expect from the brand.

Considering we are visual beings and more than ninety per cent of our perceived communication comes from non-verbal cues, and only a small percentage of our perceived communication comes from words, a brand identity must have a strong visual image linked with the brand personality, purpose, and reason for coming into existence in the first place. Together these factors have a powerful influence on accelerating growth and impacting the world and creating brand customer loyalty to achieve the commitment level with customers: have an intense and emotional attachment, receive self-expressive benefits, and have a customer experience that goes beyond merely functional benefits.

A design audit is an opportunity to check the quality of the designs, the visual aspect of the brand, the products, and the user experience, and ensure the visual elements are consistent use across all brand materials. Basically, a design audit is a checkup to make sure the company is expressing itself consistently across all communication channels. By analyzing the consistency of the brand or business visual references and core messages, it is possible to compare to other brands and businesses and identify and fix any inconsistencies. By conducting a design audit there's a chance to strengthen the brand once again.

At its core, a design audit requires gathering and assessing all brand references, written, and verbal communication, from the business card to website or other social media, from products to services—including any workshops or webinars the brand host, from staff operations to customers feedback channels or even from uniforms to interior design or retail. Many questions can be asked regarding a design audit analysis: is the same logo file always used across assets? Do they use the correct logo and colors? Is the navigation on the website always the same? Is the same logo file always used across assets? Is the typography the same throughout? Does it too follow branding guidelines?

A design audit helps systematically analyze the internal factors of the brand identifying its strength, such as the brand's advantage of improving competitiveness or its disadvantage compared with its competitors, such as its weakness. On the other hand, design audit as a framework, also provide information about the external factors, as the opportunity to improve, but also identify the brand's unfavorable factors in a certain environment or company's competitive position, such as threats. The external

⁵ Nike Vision Statement.

factors are not something the company or the brand can control or change but can identify or develop strategies to take advantage of them or minimize their impact.

5 Airlines Brand Sector

5.1 *TAP Portugal and the Retro Flight Success Story*

Nowadays, travel is more accessible, and each customer has the power to start their own brand experience handling their own booking and looking for recommendations without any intermediary. More than ever, brands must empower brand identity and touchpoints through visual communication and strategic design process to enhance customer brand image and loyalty.

With the ambition to expand its capacity opens new routes, and as part of the celebrations of the 72nd anniversary in the flying business, in 2017 the company invited passengers on board its retro-styled “Portugal” aircraft headed to Toronto, Canada.

The brand strategy was to develop a Retro Flight customer experience using a brand communication campaign providing a back-in-time visual and emotional experience to the customers [18].

The design strategy was to develop a temporary brand image retro look back. The classic image chosen recreates the original ‘Transportes Aéreos Portugueses’ with typography in the colors which were first displayed on a Lockheed Super Constellation aircraft, received by TAP in July of 1955.

Travelling through time was a glamorous and glorious experience provided to the customers. The main story was based on a 70s scenario, exploring the communication channels’ touchpoints to create a consistent narrative and enhance the customer’s experience. The aircraft, an Airbus A330, named “Portugal”⁶ was repainted with TAP’s 1970s branding (one of the most iconic TAP corporate logos). Crew and staff uniform design takes into consideration many factors: the working environments including varied climates, versatility, durability and practicality, security, health and safety regulations, cost-efficiency, and cultural and religious sensitivities as well (Figs. 3, 4 and 5).

The brand experience went even further, with some partnerships including films from the 1970s via inflight entertainment, as well as a golden oldies music channel, Portuguese products, beyond others, the Sagres beer, the 1928 chocolate brand Regina, bringing back its classic Regina fortune chocolate box, and Ach Brito lavender cologne. All to enhance the customer’s experience. Exploring the excellent Portuguese gastronomy, an original menu of the time was developed, and a Michelin chef joined the flight, providing high-level Portuguese dishes with famous red and white wine.

⁶ This was the second time a TAP aircraft has received the name of the country. As the first one was a Boeing 747–200, delivered to TAP in February of 1972.



Fig. 3 and Fig. 4 Aircraft A330, “Portugal” with TAP’s iconic logo from the 70 s. The emblematic company uniforms, designed by French stylist Louis Féraude, for the Retro Flight experience (*Image Source* The air design)

The retrojet⁷ is all about branding and connecting emotionally with customers/passengers. TAP, as a business goes all out with jet-age service to speak to customers’

⁷ Retrojet is civil airliner painted in a historic livery.



Fig. 5 Portuguese products from the 70 s (*Image Source* The air design)

nostalgia for the 70 s. According to TAP co-owner on the time, David G. Neeleman⁸—in the end, that main objective has been firmly achieved with not just an Airbus A330 retrojet, but a full historical experience from a golden age of flying for the airline. In addition, a very important cultural and political time for the Portuguese nation.

6 Branding and Technology

6.1 *Experimental Design as a Technological Approach to Hospitality Branding*

With the technological advances and the opportunities of digital channels for sharing online, brands have more visibility and are more exposed to new opportunities. New customers, and new rivals as a competing brand in a market even more global.

Many companies use stories for organizational purposes. Creating empathic relations with the public to create a strong connection with the company and the brand.

⁸ Brazilian-American businessmen and entrepreneurs, and former majority shareholders of the TAP Air.

Portugal Group.

People can mimic brain patterns and link them to events they haven't experienced firsthand. According to Uri Hasson,⁹ storytelling fosters deep social interactions through brain-to-brain connection and transport people into your experiences and make them live in their memories. This phenomenon is called "brain coupling".

Brain coupling has been investigated using various neuroimaging techniques, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). In this context, studies from Hasson's laboratory have shown that when individuals are affected by the same experience or similar patterns of brain activity, their brain activity becomes synchronized or "aligned." This can happen even if they are not in the same place [10].

In the context of brand communication, when success stories are shared, they allow potential customers to perceive the brand, emotionally deeply and in a positive way, which in turn evokes other regions of the brain favorably. Experimental Design puts the customer at the heart of the experience, as part of the Brand's Purpose.

At the beginning of 2023, Louis Vuitton Brand takes over Harrods Façade to mark the Launch of the Yayoi Kusama Collaboration. Using a projection mapping technique has the brand projected a colorful, moving Yayoi Kusama polka dot design onto the façade of Harrods (Figs. 6 and 7).

Beyond to bringing art to the streets Louis Vuitton x Yayoi Kusama uses the Harrods iconic exterior as a vast canvas, to tell a story of the brand at the heart of London community. Mapping the façade and the 27 windows at street level, with the iconic Yayoi Kusama's visuals elements to create an immersive experience to customers.

Similar brand actions started to be applied to hospitality brands. Even more, branded hotel experiences are popping up across the world, the challenge is to give the customers what they really want—a memorable experience. An immersive experience in a branded hotel is something that is not so common. Offering an immersive experience is a powerful way to give potential guests a way to explore hotels, and to give brand loyalists a way to explore locations and amenities they aren't familiar with.

A collaboration with Rotana Hotels in Dubai and the design academy has been developed for a proposal rebranding of the iconic Villa Rotana Hotel in Business Bay. A dynamic visual grammar inspired by local artefacts that generate a systemic language through a series of abstract or geometric shapes is being developed. This theme aims to explore an open dialogue among motion graphics and brands with the common goal of building stronger relationships between the customer and the place through an immersive and emotional but also sensory experience.

Another example of using technology to express brand personality and create an immersive experience is the Dot Hotel, as the new chic and basic hotel in the heart of Madrid. Starting with the brand proposition of "Find you Dot", the dot is the visual connection on all communication channels (Fig. 8).

It uses "dot" as part of its bold and iconic visual identity representing the center of Madrid. The hotel explores a creative narrative to 'dot', combining the place, culture

⁹ Professor of Psychology and Social Neuroscience at the Department of Psychology - Princeton University.



Fig. 6 and Fig. 7 Lighting up the entire Harrods building façade with Louis Vuitton and Yayoi Kusama polka dot design (*Image Source Retail focus*)



Fig. 8 Visual references of the bold and iconic visual identity of the dot hotel (*Image Source Chic and basic hotels*)

and hospitality in a system of immersive installations. According to the brand: “dot is a wake-up call, a point to stop and start a new experience”.

7 Conclusion

Effective hospitality branding through design is a multifaceted process that involves careful consideration of various factors such as user experience, brand identity, and transferable experiences. By creating an environment that is consistent with the brand’s values and identity, and by offering experiences that are unique, memorable, and transferable, hospitality businesses can establish a strong connection with their customers and create a loyal following. Through a strategic and thoughtful approach to design, hospitality brands can effectively communicate their message and differentiate themselves in a crowded market, ultimately leading to increased customer loyalty and business success.

As humans, our emotional experiences are heavily influenced by unique situational factors. Our collective and personal histories play a significant role in shaping our expectations and reactions to life events. The concept of emotions being experienced by our whole selves applies to hospitality branding as well. In the hospitality industry, creating a strong emotional connection with guests is critical to establishing brand loyalty and building a positive reputation. Hospitality brands can create emotional connections with guests by providing personalized experiences, paying attention to their needs, and fostering a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

With a welcoming atmosphere by creating an environment that is both physically and emotionally comfortable, the brand can help guests feel have a stronger emotional connection and a more positive brand experience.

Overall, the connection between our emotions and our experiences is an important aspect of hospitality branding and one that should not be overlooked by those in the industry. By understanding the role that emotions play in shaping our experiences, hospitality brands can work to create more meaningful connections with guests and build a stronger, more positive reputation over time.

Guest experience is also related to how hospitality brands adopt sustainable practices, from reducing their environmental impact, as hospitality is one of the largest consumers of resources such as energy, water, and other natural resources. By adopting sustainable practices, hospitality brands can reduce their environmental impact and contribute to the preservation of the planet.

Additionally, storytelling in hospitality branding can serve to foster empathy between the brand and its target audience. Narrative techniques can serve as an effective means of transporting individuals into the experiences of others, thereby allowing them to vicariously live through the memories of the storyteller.

By establishing an emotional brand culture, a deeper connection can be established, leading to increased brand loyalty. To accomplish this, it is imperative to integrate a sustainable brand strategy with consistent brand communication, aligned with the brand's vision, mission, and corporate culture, and it can provide unique and differentiated design solutions that can serve as a catalyst for hospitality brands.

Incorporating sustainability into hospitality branding is an increasingly crucial aspect of creating a competitive edge in the industry.

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of environmental and social issues and are placing a greater emphasis on sustainability when making purchasing decisions. Hospitality businesses that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability are more likely to attract and retain environmentally conscious customers, which can lead to increased customer loyalty and a competitive advantage.

Incorporating sustainability into branding can also lead to cost savings for businesses. By implementing sustainable practices such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and using eco-friendly materials, businesses can reduce their environmental impact while also reducing operational costs.

Sustainable branding can improve a business's reputation and enhance its image as a responsible corporate citizen. This can lead to increased trust and credibility among stakeholders, including customers, investors, and employees.

Overall, incorporating sustainability into hospitality branding is a crucial aspect of creating a competitive edge in the industry, as it not only meets the expectations of environmentally conscious consumers but also leads to cost savings and improved reputation.

Brands that prioritize sustainability in their operations and marketing efforts can foster a positive brand image, engender customer loyalty, and differentiate themselves in a crowded market. To achieve these outcomes, hospitality brands must take a comprehensive and integrated approach that involves not only sustainable operational practices, but also effective communication and engagement with customers to promote sustainable behaviors. By doing so, hospitality brands can position themselves as leaders in the industry and contribute to a more sustainable future.

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