

To: Mark Larson, Marriott Sales and Branding Manager
From: Janie Ralston, Ralston Strategists UXD
RE: Plan for Marriott Properties Digital Redesign

Hi Mark,

Thank you for contacting Ralston Strategists regarding the Marriott digital properties redesign project. The redesign plan you sent over calls for immediate creation of new design deliverables and major changes to the user experience on both the website and the web application. After reviewing this plan, our team would like to add user research to the timeline prior to any design deliverable work. User research focuses on the behaviors, needs and motivations of users and informs the design to provide the team with a better understanding of what users want and how they complete the task of booking accommodations through Marriott.com and the web application.

As a preliminary step, Ralston Strategists completed a small user research study with three participants. The participants were asked to book their next vacation accommodations using Marriott.com. While this initial user research yielded workable results, it is important to gain a better understanding of Marriott users and potential brand customers. For users to be successful in completing the desired task, the website must be user friendly, functional, efficient and have desirability for customers. Once these needs have been met the business goals of increasing profit will be successful.

This initial user research showed us there are a few user experience problems that need to be corrected to ensure customers are successful in booking accommodations through Marriott digital properties. A few of the areas that require a change in design or could be improved through user research:

- Showing the customer how to start to process of booking accommodations
- Filtering for desired wants and needs
- Ability to find accommodations near specific attractions
- Finding daily and total price
- Complete booking

Through user research we will find out the following to help improve the overall user experience:

- What motivates the customer to book a hotel room?
- What are the customer's priorities when booking a hotel room?
- What are the customer's needs?
- What are the customer's wants?
- How can the customer be more successful at completing a booking?

To find out this information to create an informed design, we will need to complete further user research. User research does not take a considerable amount of time and can be completed with just a few participants. Conducting user research prior to design work costs drastically less than creating a deliverable only to find it doesn't meet the user's needs the way we had anticipated. This is a necessary step in the Marriott digital properties redesign. Please contact me with any questions you have regarding adding user research to the project plan.

Best regards,

Janie Ralston