Part I: Interview Plan

1a. User Research Goals

Marriott digital properties seek to enhance the user experience while increasing hotel sales and rewards member registrations. To meet the needs of users and to exceed business goals the following goals for this user research include:

- Discover the user's motivations behind booking travel.

- Discover the user's needs and preferences while booking travel.

- Inform design team about the tasks users need to complete to successfully book travel.

1b. User Research Questions

To discover the needs of users and the motivations behind their hotel booking experience this set of user interviews will seek to find the answers to the following research questions:

- What is the user demographic?

- How often do people travel and stay in hotels?

- How often do people choose a highline or specialty hotel room?

- How do people book travel?

- What type of websites do users book travel with?

- What type of technology do users utilize to book travel?

- Have they used Marriott.com in the past?

- What is the motivation for travel?

- How do users choose a hotel?

- How do users choose a travel destination?

- Do users book hotel and flight packages? What is the motivation behind booking packages?

- Do users register for rewards programs?

- What value do users find in rewards programs?

1c. User Research Hypotheses

The interviews will seek to confirm or reject the following hypotheses:

- Users book travel the way they know best or the most convenient way available to them.

- Users book travel when they have to, not necessarily because they want to.

- Users are motivated by convenience and cost.

- Users book flight and hotel packages because they believe it will save them money.

- Users do not find value in rewards programs.

Part II: Interview Guide

2a. Introduction

Hi _____, my name is Janie Ralston, I am here to ask you a few questions about vacations and travel. The Marriott design team would like to improve the homepage and need to know more about your experience and motivations behind booking travel. The information you provide us with today is confidential and will only be shared with team members for the purpose of enhancing the user experience. The interview today will take about 30 minutes and will be video recorded. Are you okay with this interviewing being recorded? If so please sign the consent form I have provided you with.

Thank you for taking the time out of your day to share your thoughts with me today. There are no wrong answers here and all information you provide me with will be kept strictly confidential and be used to better the Marriott.com website.

2b. Warm Up

What is your name?

What is your profession?

How old are you?

Where are you from?

How often do you travel?

What websites have you used in the past to book travel?

Have you used Marriott.com within the last six months?

2c. The Body

How often do you stay in hotels?

How often do you book travel accommodations?

How do you book travel accommodations? What type of technology do you use?

Think about the last travel you booked.

What prompted you to book this trip?

Where did you/or where are you going?

Why did you choose this location?

How did you book your hotel accommodations and flight?

Why did you choose this method to book your travel?

How often do you book travel packages?

Why did you choose to book hotel and flight together?

How often do you sign up for frequent traveler rewards?

What prompts you to register for frequent traveler rewards?

2d. The Cool-Down

Do you have any more information you would like to share with me?

Do you have any questions?

2e. The Wrap-Up

This concludes the interview. I want to thank you for your time today. I appreciate you taking the time to help us develop better services and a better website for Marriott.com.

Part III: Interview Summary

Interview Overview

I asked five of my co-workers to participate in the user research interviews. One declined due to being filmed and another couldn't find time on her calendar to match my availability. I reserved a small conference room in the building and set up the chairs so that both the participant and myself would be in the camera angle. Unfortunately the battery on the camera I used did not hold a charge so I was forced to plug it into an outlet in the room. This made filming a little awkward because I had to cram the chairs together.

I gave each participant an overview of my assignment and explained how and where the interview would take place. I also explained the purpose of the interview again at the time of the interview. I set up the consent form and had a pen ready so that they could sign the form easily.

I found two of the participants were quite talkative (1&3) while number 2 was quieter than I had anticipated. I am not sure if the interviews were more or less awkward because I know the participants! Knowing the participants made it a little difficult to keep some on track with the questions I asked. Had I completed the interviews with strangers I would have probably needed more warm up time to get them comfortable enough to share their thoughts and experiences with me.

The time flew for all of the interviews; the shortest interview was seven minutes long while the longest was fourteen. If I had a chance to do it over again I would have created more questions to ask the participants.

Participant #1: Dilyana
Length: 11 minutes

Dilyana is a 22 year old college student who works as a student assistant on her university campus. She is originally from Bulgaria and moved to the united states several years ago. She travels 1-2 times per year and typically uses travel websites such as Expedia.com to book her travel. She has never used Marriott.com.

Dilyana recently traveled for an interview for a summer internship. She used the companies third party software to select her flight options and the company she was interviewing for booked her hotel.

Dilyana discussed her previous travel booking experiences as stressful and confusing. She worries about the accuracy of the information and the accuracy of her data entry into the travel website. She uses a laptop to access the travel website and would not use a mobile device as she feels she has to enter too much information.

She has never booked a package or signed up for a travel rewards program as she feels she does not travel enough to make it worthwhile.

Participant #2: Melissa
Length: 7 minutes

Melissa is a 29 year old library technician working at a university. She is originally from Maine, but has resided in Nevada for over 20 years now. She travels 1-2 times per year and frequently uses travel websites to book these trips. She has used Hot Wire.com, Travelocity.com, Expedia.com, Hotels.com and Kayak.com to research or book travel in the past. She has never used Marriott.com.

Melissa recently booked a pending vacation to Jamaica using Expedia.com. She and a friend are going for vacation, she has always wanted to visit, but the timing and price worked out for she and the friend so they went ahead and booked the trip. She used a personal desktop computer to book this travel. She has used her laptop to book travel in the past, but has not used a mobile device to book travel.

Melissa has booked travel packages in the past if there is a better deal with the package. She finds booking packages easier than booking separate travel accommodations because she knows the check in dates will coordinate with the flight details and there is less room for a data entry error. She is a current rewards member with Hotels.com and gets a free room with every X amount of nights booked through the website. She finds value in the free room and initially signed up for the rewards program because they offered a free room just for registering.

Participant #3: Shelley
Length: 14 minutes

Shelley is a 63 year old professor at a university. She travels 1 time per year, but stays in hotels 2-3 times per year. She has used travel websites in the past, particularly Travelocity.com. She has also used many hotel websites in the past including Motel6.com, Hilton.com. She has never used Marriott.com.

Shelley books her own travel accommodations unless she is traveling with a friend. She uses a personal desktop computer and doesn't use a mobile device as she feels creating the booking would take too long.

Shelley is currently in the process of planning a vacation to Vermont to view the "fall colors". She has used Google and many travel websites to research where the best places to stay and visits during this trip. She likes to do a lot of research and planning before booking because she wants to ensure she will be happy with her accommodations. She researches the pictures, amenities, local tourist attractions, reviews and often looks for free add ons including breakfast in the hotel.

She has booked a package in the past, but was very disappointed and prefers to book each piece of travel separately to ensure it has the accommodations she prefers. She is a rewards member of Travelocity.com and finds value in that it offers a free night stay with every X nights booked. She also received a free night right away for signing up with the rewards program.