



Hospitality and Tourism Distribution System: A Case Study of Accor Hotel Group

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Abstract

Although hospitality and tourism marketing is relatively new, contributing to the global economy greatly. Hospitality and tourism distribution is not as same as other service marketing, due to the extreme visibility of its sales. Therefore, in addition to the brands, successful companies run a distribution system, which has to become more powerful and leverage the close fit among the direct reservation channels. Those companies, thus, can respond more effectively to the customers' increasing shift to online room booking practices, for instance. These efforts are to pursue in the years ahead with an ambitious capital expenditure program to retain control over the customer relationships. The hotel and tourism distribution system, finally, offers a variety of systems and methods to maximize company revenue. The main objective of this study is to identify the factors to be considered in designing the hospitality and tourism distribution system, which can be followed by others.

Key Words: Hospitality and Tourism Distribution, Marketing, Customer Relationship, Economic Impact, Information and Knowledge.

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to data, tourism is the world's largest industry and the fourth-largest export item. According to recent studies, over the next ten years, tourism will grow by 4.5% annually. After COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine has been triggering a costly uncivilized crisis that demands a peaceful solution. <https://wtcc.org/research/economic-impact> (viewed on 25, November, 2022) whereas Travel & Tourism's contribution to GDP decreased by over US\$4.9 trillion in 2020 (-50.4% turn down), it grew by US\$1 trillion (+21.7% move up) in 2021. Due to persistent mobility constraints, the Travel & Tourism sector's contribution to the global GDP fell from 10.3% in 2019 to 5.3% in 2020. The proportion rose to 6.1% in 2021. According to Aharon et al. (2021), the uncertainty caused by the pandemic in terms of the spread of the disease, its lethality, the amount of time needed to create vaccines, anonymous economic rumours, etc., played a significant role in determining whether the value of warm equity rose or fell.

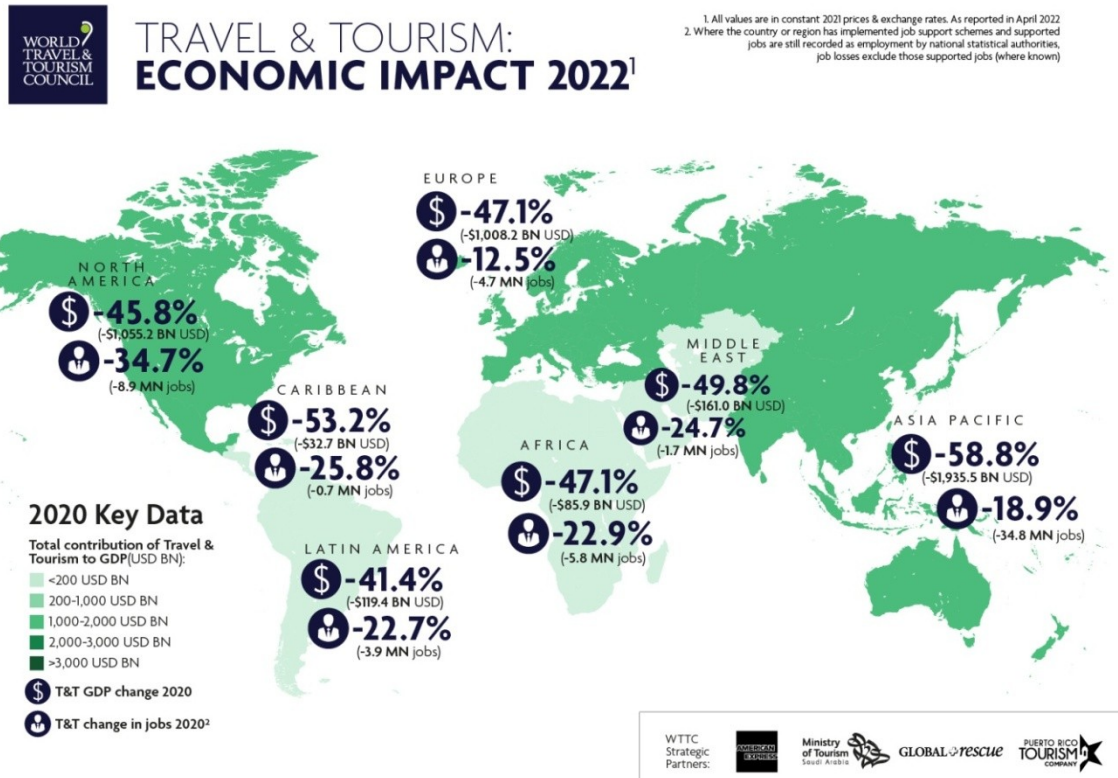
Structure on the power of Accor Hotel Group side and of Accor Hotel Group integrated ecosystem of most important brands, modified services & specialist solution, they sever novel position to reimagining hospitality and motivate novel conduct to knowledge the earth. Zimbabwe and Dubai gained worldwide recognition as top tourist destinations. The administration of Dubai built a socioeconomic culture that is solely dependent on the travel and tourism industry. They plan to invest US\$70 billion in the travel and tourism industry. Unlike other industries, the hospitality and tourist sector is entirely global in scope. In order to appeal to customers worldwide, enterprises in this sector now create their goods and services as specifically as feasible. Consumers dominate this industry to the point where businesspeople are under intense customer pressure. The successful businesses respond to client demands by offering them distinctive goods and services at competitive prices and in a fair amount of time. Today's hospitality businesses bundle travel and sightseeing with food and drink to entice customers. These businesses' sales, marketing, and promotional strategies are all highly distinctive and tailored.

Successful managers place a high priority on customer happiness over profit maximisation although most corporate organisations set their goals for maximising profits. As a result, they developed their marketing plans to increase client happiness, which in turn will increase consumer loyalty. Since there is fierce competition among the businesses in the hospitality and tourism industries, customer retention is the most difficult problem to solve. Due to the very worldwide character of the industry, most businesses strive to make their goods and services as specialised as possible in order to draw in overseas clients. Also, businesses use marketing methods to identify client demands and wishes, appraise them, and then meet those demands to win over customers' loyalty. For instance, clients typically demand a single travel and accommodation package. Those who work in organisations should therefore be sufficiently knowledgeable about both business ideas and hospitality marketing.

A distribution platform is a potent catalyst for increased hotel performance and bookings, increasing hotel income. Generally speaking, the platform includes the implementation of a multi-channel strategy matched to each guest need and booking procedure. The guest experience has lately changed as a result of the digital revolution, which has also changed the way hotels are distributed. Businesses analyse the intricacy of this dynamic market, make investments in their

websites and mobile applications, and link hotels to their most well-liked partner travel websites while negotiating the best possible conditions. Also, several loyalty programmes within the hospitality and tourist business are crucial in fostering relationships with favoured customers. In order to optimise revenue, the system provides its hoteliers with a number of systems and techniques.

Figure 1: Travel and Tourism Sectors Economic Impact 2022.



(Source: <https://wttc.org/Portals/0/Images/Reports/2022/EIR2022-Infographic-Maps-Global-2020.jpg>, viewed on 14 Decemebr, 2022)

2. METHODOLOGY

The study focuses on the hospitality and tourism industry's marketing and distribution network. As a result, the Accor hotel group, a hospitality and tourism corporation, has done some analysis. The organisation was chosen for its operational breadth in the hospitality and tourism industries, and in particular because it has a cutting-edge distribution system for these industries. Information for this qualitative study was gathered from secondary sources such as research papers, articles, annual reports, journals, business websites, online publications, catalogues, etc.

3. ACCOR HOTEL GROUP AT A GLANCE

With the opening of the first Novotel in Lille Lesquin in 1967, Accor began its venture into the hotel and travel industries. Since its debut, Accor brand hotels around the world have grown from one hotel to 4,426, from one country to 92, and with 180,000 workers. Almost 130 million meals are delivered annually by Accor, which has 145,000 owned, leased, and managed rooms, 11,600 meeting rooms, and a total capacity of 1 million people. There are more than 6,000 new Le Club Accor hotels members joining every day, 183 million visitors every year use Accor booking sites, and 1 booking is made on an Accor website every three seconds.

In order to improve market share and revenue, Accor successfully manages properties, guarantees occupancy rates, and works to build particular relationships with customers. A wide range of accommodations, from luxurious to affordable, are offered by Accor's diverse array of hotel brands, which includes Sofitel, MGallery, Novotel, Suite Novotel, Pullman, Adagio, Mercure, ibis, all seasons/ibis Styles, Etap Hotel/Formule 1/ ibis budget, hotelF1, and Motel 6. The Group provides approximately 45 years of experience and knowledge to its clients and partners. Team members have been motivated by a pioneering spirit of conquest ever from the opening. This mindset, which is essential to Accor's success, has over time defined the Group's culture and served as the glue that links their team members while appreciating their differences in ages, cultures, and positions. The culture of Accor is also influenced by a dedication to the highest performance standards as well as an ongoing concern for people.

Every day in Accor brand hotels around the world, the company's five core values – innovation as a trademark, the spirit of conquest as a growth engine, performance as the secret to ongoing success, respect as the cornerstone of all relationships, and trust as the cornerstone of management – are shared and expressed. In order to support team members during the Group's continuing transformation and development, managers make use of these values. As a solely focused player in the hotel industry, the group owns, operates, and franchises hotels ranging from budget to luxury on all five continents. The strategy of Accor is supported by four pillars:

- i. a potent marketing strategy that revives Accor's brand and Economical Hotels' business.
- ii. Accor's three strategically connected businesses – hotel owner, operator, and franchisor – display exceptional operational experience across all market categories and geographical areas.
- iii. The Group's business performance is enhanced by a value-creating asset management approach that also supports expansion and optimises the balance sheet.
- iv. A development plan with the objective of strengthening the Group's current dominance in Europe and Latin America and elevating it to the top of the pack in Asia-Pacific, particularly China.

Accor's company clearly recovered in 2012, as evidenced by results that were significantly better. The Group has the resources necessary to accelerate its rate of expansion and establish itself as the industry leader in all areas of operation. It is fully committed to hotel operations and is supported by a very strong financial position. It will accomplish this goal while adhering to its obligations to shareholders, keeping in touch with them, and giving them comprehensive, open information. With the intention of setting the global standard for the hospitality sector and offering clients a

distinctive, consistently upgraded hotel experience, Accor pursued its transformation and established the framework for further expansion.

In terms of operating excellence and hotel distribution, Accor improved its performance. Le Club Accorhotels, the rebranded loyalty programme for Accor, now boasts 8.3 million members worldwide, including more than 2 million in Asia. Also, 60% of Accor's revenues come from central booking systems, a statistic that is constantly rising and helps the company to keep a direct line of communication open with its clients. The environment in which large service organisations operate is changing at a faster rate and with a wider range of change as customers adapt, and Accor and its brands are doing the same. As a result, Accor Group has accelerated its own transition. The advent of digital technology has altered visitor behaviours and conduct.

Today's guests desire more connection with the brands and are more knowledgeable about the hotel options. They seek for brands that are attentive to their requirements and truly understand them because they want more than just their practical demands to be met. Customers today, whether wealthy or not, can book a room in any hotel category, from budget to fancy. Economy brands must therefore come up with increasingly creative strategies to please customers. That is the secret to building customer preference and distinctiveness.

The future growth benchmarks that Accor will reach on its way to becoming the industry standard in hospitality have been outlined. The Group generated strong growth in 2012 and intensified its transformation, which is being driven by three strategic drivers: the brands, distribution, and development. The ibis family's deployment in particular helped to expand the brand portfolio, which spans every market from luxury to economic. The brands are more enticing and better positioned, and they are backed by a strong distribution network and a loyalty programme with more than 10 million participants. The difficulty in distribution for Accor is to develop personal connections with customers in order to foster intimacy and loyalty.

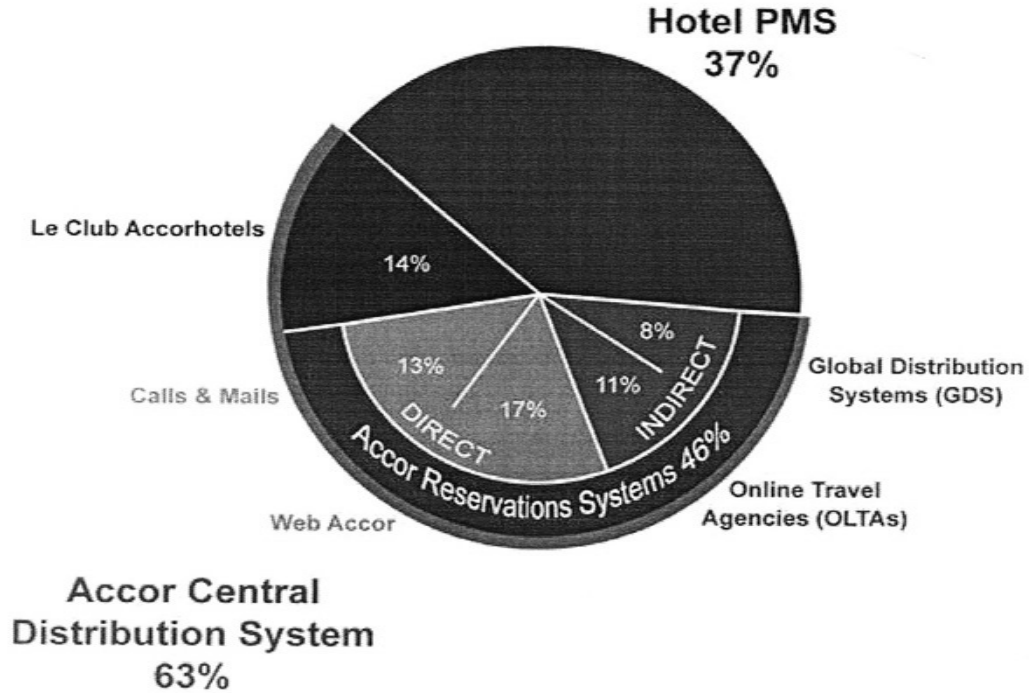
4. ACCOR DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

The Accor Central Distribution System connects all participants in the industry by offering a real-time picture of the different factors that must be taken into consideration when making a reservation, including rates, availability, and images and descriptions of the hotels. The Accor Central Distribution System solutions connect the hotel to all reservation systems required to improve performance, and go beyond simply being a database connected directly to distribution channels (the hotel property management system and revenue management tools). By ensuring that hoteliers can sell their rooms at the correct price and at the right time for a specific customer, the system optimises room occupancy rate and raises average rate.

To effectively respond to the guests' increasing move to online room booking practises, the system must now become stronger and harness the close fit among direct reservation channels. This year, in particular, Accor is increasing access to its websites through a significant number of mobile applications. More than half of their sales in 2012 came via the central booking system, with roughly 28% of those transactions occurring online. Le Club Accorhotels, Accor's reward programme, now boasts more than 10 million members. An extensive capital expenditure programme will be implemented in the coming years to continue these efforts and maintain control over Accor's client connections. The problems of enhancing unique relationships with

clients, ensuring occupancy rates, and successfully managing hotels to boost market share and revenue must be overcome by Accor every day.

In 2012, Accor Distribution Systems contributed 63% of the company's hotel revenue. Shown in Figure: 2



Source: Accor Reservations Systems; December 2012

In Table: 1, the study shows Accor Group First-quarter 2022 revenue of €701.

In € millions	Q1 2021	Q1 2022	Change (LFL) ⁽¹⁾ vs Q1 21	Change (LFL) ⁽¹⁾ vs Q1 19
South Europe	17	38	123%	-27%
North Europe	10	30	167%	-47%
ASPAC	20	24	18%	-55%
IMEAT	11	32	185%	0%
Americas	15	33	103%	22%
Total	73	158	106%	33%

⁽¹⁾ Like-for-like: at constant scope of consolidation and exchange rates

Source: <https://press.accor.com/first-quarter-2022-revenueof-e701-millionup-85-like-for-like/?lang=en> (viewed on 14 Decmeber, 2022)

In 2021, the Group reported consolidated revenue of 2,204 million Euros, an increase of 34% like-for-like over FY 2020, according to Karantzavelou (2022). This growth is actually broken down into a 36% increase in hotel services and a 29% increase in hotel assets & other. To compare with RevPAR, which is always expressed as the change from FY 2019, the like-for-like reduction in revenue from FY 2019 is (42%).

5. DIGITAL HOSPITALITY

With the only central booking system that is entirely online, Accor is at the cutting edge of innovation worldwide. Online sales increased and made up around 28% of the total in 2012. Accor increased its online visibility and made investments in mobile e-commerce services. The central distribution system's powerful features are available to assist the hotels and partners in maximising their efficiency.

Today's visitors are frequently "multi-connected," having access to the internet at home, at work, and when travelling. They have the most recent models of smartphones and tablets, which are steadily and quickly gaining in popularity. At every stage of the guest experience, Accor has implemented cutting-edge solutions in response to this radical shift in behaviour.

Online sales, which have double-digit annual growth, are crucial to hotel distribution. In light of this climate, Accor regularly updates its hotel booking website, accorhotels.com. The portal provides a wide variety of features that make it simpler to find and draw clients at crucial stages of the search and booking process. 28 versions, 13 languages, 16 location mini-sites, 8 million monthly views, 14 brand websites (sofitel.com, MGallery.com, ibishotel.com, and so on), and 4 professional user sites make up accorhotels.com, a multi-brand portal with 14 hotel brands (B2B). Call centres serve as a key lever for increasing revenue. More than 3 million contacts, 300,000 calls, and 30,000 emails in 15 languages are managed by Accor's 9 platforms in places like Paris, Bangalore, Dalian, Sao Paulo, Sydney, and Rabat.

6. CONSTANTLY INTERACTING WITH GUESTS

Accor and its brands are creating permanent, direct, interactive guest relationships through e-commerce sites and social media. E-commerce site income increased again in 2012 and made up 27.8% of the total combined revenue. This success was attributed to a dynamic, multichannel strategy that included cutting-edge, efficient e-commerce sites, mobile applications for all operating systems, and an expanding social media presence. During every phase of their journey, guests benefit from enhanced usability, seamlessness, and recognition.

■ Accorhotels.com attracted 9 million visitors a month in 2012

Customers will receive the best deals and the widest selection of hotel rooms thanks to our multi-brand platform. The site, which is regularly updated, provides new services for internet users, such as quicker, more effective multi-criteria hotel search functions. A guest profile records preferences and allows for tracking of both advanced reservations for hotel services other than rooms and breakfast as well as room reservations.

■ The websites for 14 hotel brands, which had 126 million visitors in 2012, are extending this digital ecosystem.

These websites, which operate as showrooms and points of interaction between brands and their customers, are continually changing, as seen by the following developments throughout the course of the year:

- a new Sofitel website that is more adaptable, comprehensive, and has more images;
- the websites mercure.com and novotel.com now offer Russian and Polish as new languages;
- a brand-new, first-of-its-kind long-stay booking feature on adagio-city.com.

7. A GROWING PRESENCE IN NEW MEDIA

300,000 people downloaded the Accorhotels.com app in 2012, while more than 12 million people visited the website. The telephone is becoming a more and more necessary tool for making hotel reservations as a result of the exponential increase in the most recent generation of smartphones and the introduction of mobile broadband. Mobile devices are increasingly being used to make online reservations because they are great for last-minute searches. Accor has made investments to adapt its websites for mobile phones and to provide free applications for reserving a room with just a few clicks. As a result, the company has been successful in increasing the number of rooms purchased by mobile phone by more than double in just one year. The Accorhotels.com app was first made available for iPhone, then BlackBerry, and is now accessible for Android. The app allows phone users to effortlessly book a room, access promotional deals, do a geolocalized search, and manage ongoing reservations all in a completely secure environment.

There are several benefits to developing new interactions between brands and their customers thanks to new media. They support an open, interactive type of communication that ushers in a new age in the travel industry. According to a study of business visitors in Europe, 49% of them post comments on social media. Online users contribute as brand advocates and experts by sharing their experiences. With the ability to post and access Trip Advisor reviews for more than 3,500 hotels directly on Accorhotels.com, Accor was a pioneer in this field.

The service reached a milestone in 2012 when it reached 165,000 Facebook fans and 63,000 Le Club Accor hotels members. Now, visitors may link their Accorhotels.com profiles to their Facebook accounts. As a result, users can suggest a hotel to a friend, who can subsequently give them their feedback. Accor can be found on Twitter as well. The hotel brands have also been highly active, with Sofitel, for instance, utilising international online events to successfully build and maintain a true brand community. The Magnifique Cities by Night and 80 Magnifique Nights Facebook promotions brought in close to 50,000 new fans. One of the busiest Facebook pages on the market, Sofitel's fan following has increased by 300% over the past year.

8. A POWERFUL SALES ORGANIZATION TO SERVE HOTEL OPERATORS

To aid its hotels in the struggle for revenue, Accor commits significant resources. The TARS central booking system, to which all the hotels are connected, is the centre of this procedure. Additionally, the businesses coordinate events all year long to improve their reputation and draw in as many visitors as possible.

i. TARS: The Hub of the Accor Distribution System

The Travel Accor Reservation System (TARS) keeps proving how important it is every year. The challenge is significant: to attract more guests and enable the hotels to boost income by giving



them low-cost access to new distribution channels. TARS, which accounted for 48 million hotel stays in 2012, produced almost 50% of Accor's hotel revenue. For all hotels, TARS acts as a potent booking and performance driver. It also provides a guarantee of over-market revenue per available room for Accor's partners, franchisees, and investors (RevPAR). The system gives hotels access to reservations made through its direct channels, specifically:

- websites operated by the Group, including the Accorhotels.com portal, mobile applications, and websites for each hotel brand. They produce one booking collectively every three seconds;
- The nine call centers worldwide that provide booking services in 15 different languages. Our business partners, which include well-known international travel agency networks, significant participants in the online travel industry, and conventional tour operators, also market rooms.

ii. The Key Role of Corporate Sales

Accor is a significant player in the business travel market, generating bookings through sales teams in more than 50 nations, including important rising markets like China, Brazil, India, Indonesia, and Russia. A proactive approach of collaboration with international organisations, such as the Association of Corporate Travel Executives and the Global Business Travel Association, is also enhancing the visibility and market share of Group hotels with the top corporations in the globe.

iii. Reinventing the Guest Relationship with Digital Technology

In order to give guests a friendlier welcome and a more carefree, customised experience, Accor is consistently investing in innovative technology. Visitors can indicate their interests and habits for hotel stays by creating an online profile on Accorhotels.com. In order to enhance the visitor experience and provide the appropriate services for each stay, hotels can access this information. The TARS booking system, revenue management systems, customer relationship management systems, and guest satisfaction management systems are all connected to an integrated platform that Accor hotels can use. This innovative technology, which offers hotel owners a completely secure solution that increases revenue, saves time, and maximises access to cutting-edge technologies like smartphone-based check-in/check-out services and electronic invoices, has already won the support of more than 2,200 Accor hotels. The brands also reaffirmed their different characteristics throughout the year and highlighted their promotions:

- The second phase of Sofitel's Life is Magnifique marketing campaign, which takes the guise of a travel journal, has begun. The advertisements highlighted the hotels, each of which contributes to the narrative of the upscale brand;
- MGallery launched a fresh brand film and ran numerous advertising efforts all year long;
- Suite Novotel introduced an ingenious buzz campaign called "12.21.2012 Revival" that was linked to the supposed end-of-the-world announced in the Mayan calendar;
- Several French television programmes were sponsored by Aparthotels Adagio;
- Mercure, Suite Novotel, and other budget-friendly brands advertised their unique seasonal deals;

- Happy Click was a three-month promotion run by ibis Styles that gave travellers in 11 countries a 10% discount on hotel reservations made through Accor websites. A unique coded voucher used in the offer was distributed in hotels, posted on Facebook, and included in the monthly newsletter. The objective was to reward Facebook subscribers and fans while accelerating the increase of bookings made through Group websites.

iv. Showcasing the Brands

In a market with intense competition, a brand's strength and appeal are crucial in shaping consumer preference. Large-scale advertising efforts have therefore been created, particularly for:

- Accorhotels.com is the website. In the top markets for Accor hotels, such as Germany, Brazil, France, and the United Kingdom, as well as in Austria and Africa, the advertisement was broadcast on television and online;
- the ibis family, who made great use of print, billboard, and television advertising throughout 56 nations. The campaign's subject of "pleasant sleep" was chosen to coincide with the rollout of a new visual identity for the ibis, ibis Styles, and ibis budget brands.

9. CONCLUSION

The new Distribution Excellence (DEX) programme was created by Accor hotels' distribution system primarily for hotel general managers and revenue managers. The course aids hotel managers in comprehending the main concerns and difficulties brought by distribution channels and reservations procedures. Also, it offers guidelines for formulating a plan and creating practical distribution strategies for their hotels. The main factor that makes Accor hotels appealing to partners is their booking and distribution system, which works in favour of and in harmony with the brands. The guest experience is always being improved because to the digital revolution. Bangladesh has to learn from the global marketing strategies for hospitality.

With more potent brands and the knowledge gained from operating hotels for more than 40 years, Accor is the dominant force in all market segments globally. With a brand portfolio that spans all market sectors, Accor is able to offer hotel accommodations that are suitable for any traveler's needs and financial situation. The brands are adapting more quickly to forge emotional connections with clients and to give them chic, modern interiors in response to swiftly shifting consumer patterns. The significant initiative to rejuvenate the Group's budget hotels is the most revealing illustration of this transition. Every day, brands innovate to develop unique connections with consumers and incorporate their new routines. The dominance of Accor Hotels is supported by strong, appealing brands that inspire preference among their partners and clients. Accor hotels create even more intriguing innovations to make the hotels enticing in order to give guests an amazing hotel experience. All market sectors, from luxury to economic, are affected by this. Knowledge and information are crucial for sustainable company operations.

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