FRENCH HOTELS, ENGLISH TOURISTS

WEB CONTENT TO ATTRACT THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CONSUMER

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Secondly, I would like to thank my supervising professor, Professor Chantal Ladias. Your continued support and being open to my many changes to this dissertation have been a breath of fresh air. I thank you for your help and for encouraging me to research what I am interested in.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my classmates and friends of MA Marketing program. I thank you for being the best class I have ever had, and for always helping each other do better, and being present for one another.

I would like to thank the Dublin Business School and Liverpool John Moores University for making this course available and for having an exceptional faculty.

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family; my parents, brother, and grandparents in Canada, as well as my boyfriend.

I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to meet all the people mentioned above, and without you this dissertation would not have been possible.
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Abstract

Purpose – Through this Masters dissertation, the researcher aims to understand the use of English in tourism, and the importance of tourism in France. More specifically, the researcher aims to determine whether English can help French hotel managers better cater to English speaking guests, and boost sales.

Methodology - Through the literature review the researcher gained an enormous amount of knowledge regarding the global tourism industry, the tourism industry of France, the use of online travel booking outlets, and English as the language of e-commerce. Also, the researcher conducted a survey to which 120 respondents answered questions regarding tourism and the French tourism industry.

Findings – Through social media, online advertising, and the development of websites, hotels can better promote their services to English speaking tourists who are willing to book directly with hotels. This achieves a direct line of communication, cuts out the 3rd party intermediary retailer, and the hotel is able to profit more and provide a better service to the customer.

Limitations - The questionnaire was administered through Facebook and direct mail that may lead to limitations on the demographics of those who answered. However, the aim was to reach an English speaking market and all those who answered the questionnaire originated from countries where English is the first language. Also, another limitation could be that of the level of experience the researcher has with collecting primary data, as they have never done so prior to this course.

Practical implications - Outcomes and implications for practice resulting from this dissertation are that French hotels wanting to attract more English speaking tourists must reform their current advertising, sales, and promotional scheme to generate profit. By continuing to generate all their English-speaking customers via 3rd party intermediaries, they are losing out profits that are being spent in high commissions to the 3rd party retailers.
Value of paper - This dissertation aims to add value to anyone in the tourism industry seeking to draw in Anglophone tourists.
Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background

Tourism is an important driving force for many companies, and contributes to the growth of the global economy as well. Tourism promotes foreign exchange, new business growth, and job creation. The tourism industry has evolved and shifted substantially over the last 30 years and has profited from economic advancements, increased purchasing power and decreased transportation costs. Now, the tourists’ purchases have a direct impact on a country’s economics, currency exchange, and real estate investments. (Barros and Botti et al., 2011, pp. 141–146)

As of 2013, the Global Tourism industry is worth an estimated $1.3 trillion, with revenue rising at a 2.5% annual rate. The industry houses +1.6 million businesses and provides +54.3 million jobs. (IBIS Worldwide, 2013) According to a 2014 press release by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals grew by 5% in 2013 despite global economic challenges and affects of recession. (World Tourism Organization UNWTO, 2014) The UNWTO goes on to state that Europe welcomed the majority of the 52 million additional tourists at 29 million travelers, hitting a growth rate of +5% above the 2013 forecast, raising the total to 563 million travelers to Europe in 2013.

Some specialists agree that one reason for the increase in global tourism and exchange is due to the boom in online tourism. Online tourism provides an easier, more direct solution for travelers to gain information on their desired destinations, and make all travel arrangements from the comfort of their homes.

Karanasios and Burgess argue that small tourism enterprises must face the hard realities of the accessibility and convenience the Internet provides, and they must change perspectives and seek online marketing solutions in order to compete in the online market. Meanwhile, Dixit and Belwal describe online tourism as a “melting pot” of convergence, where the Internet provides intermediaries with the opportunity to set up their businesses in one country, and make profits off the businesses of another through booking fees and commissions. Intermediaries are
becoming very good at building their own brands that allow consumers to easily contact them, creating a dialogue that brings consumers closer, and further extend the brand. (Dixit and Belwal et al., 2006)

Therefore, as Karanasios and Burgess state, for businesses to survive this change in the marketplace and to be able to get a piece of and profit from the booming increase in tourism, they must be able to communicate with consumers on a global level, online.

1.2 Research Area, Research Question, Research Objectives

This research paper will focus on France, which draws the highest number of tourists yearly, and how one simple change can aid French business owners in generating more revenue.

The dissertation working title is:
“French Hotels, English Tourism: Defining what brings Anglophones to France”

The dissertation working question is:
“How can the English language be better utilized in the online promotion of French hotels?”

To determine exactly what elements need to be determined to answer the above question, the researcher has developed a list of objects that they hope to meet throughout the process of this dissertation. They are as follows:

To determine the important of tourism in France
   To determine the impact of tourism on France’s economy

To determine the importance of online travel industry
   To determine how travelers get travel information
   To determine the reasons travelers book online

To determine the manner in which people book online
   To determine the impact of 3rd party intermediaries
To uncover traveler expectations of hotels
To determine what drives online hotel booking

To determine the use of English in e-commerce and tourism
To determine how many travelers expect to speak English when abroad
To determine if French hotels are satisfying communication needs of guests

1.3 Suitability of the Researcher

The researcher holds high interest in this topic. The researcher aims to work in the field of market, more specifically in English web content writing. Academic background and work experience are listed below to help justify the suitability of the researcher to this topic.

1.3.1 Academic Background

The researcher has an academic background from having studied marketing in this course at the Dublin Business School, beginning in January 2013. The research has been learning different strategies of online marketing and how to better utilize social media outlets.

1.3.2 Work Background

The researcher’s working background in marketing is much more extensive than their academic background in the field. The researcher began working in marketing in 2006 as a promotional brand ambassador for various marketing campaigns in Canada. Since then, they have gained versatile marketing experience as she has held past roles in media, PR, advertising, and event management. She has ample experience in writing website content, invitations, brochures, training manuals, and press releases for a wide range of companies and products.

From 2011 to 2013, the researcher gained experience in the areas of communication, and
promotion. She most enjoyed writing website content for the Tourism and Hospitality industries, as well as creating marketing campaigns for new film launches while working full time for an advertising agency in Toronto.

1.4 Contributions of the Study

The research will provide a better look at the specific requirement for French hotels marketing to English-speaking tourists. The research will look at Anglophone expectations of French hotels and what the companies are currently doing to market to this demographic. The researcher will use her knowledge of marketing to contribute as much theory and practice to the research process as possible, with the hope that it will result in beneficial results to the French tourism industry.

1.5 Scope of the Research and Limitation

The researcher will include statistical evidence and information in the literature review and also draw upon the theories set forth by professional organizations and specialists in the tourism industry.

The primary limitation the researcher with deal with is their ability to survey effectively. However, the research will do their best to create an unbiased research method that will encompass many aspects tourism’s needs and requirements to create a successful campaign.

1.6 Recipients of the Research

Recipients of the research done for the purpose of this Masters dissertation for the Dublin Business School are as follows:

• 1st recipient: Dublin Business School
  • 2nd recipient: Liverpool John Moores University
• 3rd recipient: Professor Chantal Ladias, the researcher’s supervisor.
• 4th recipient: the researcher herself (Alexandra Tropea), MA Marketing Candidate

1.7 Dissertation Organization

Chapter 1 will introduce the dissertation and will be comprised of several elements, including the area being researched, research objectives, research question and researcher’s background and more.

Chapter 2 includes the ‘Literature Review’ that resumes the entire secondary researcher to be contributed to the final conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter 3 includes ‘Research Methodology’ and this section specifies how the researcher will conduct their research project to meet her objectives.

Chapter 4 includes the ‘Data Analysis and Findings’ and this section will take an in depth look at the research findings collected through the various research methods.

Chapter 5 includes both the ‘Conclusion and Recommendations’ and the researcher will summarize important points from both the secondary and primary data collection to draw conclusions and make recommendations regarding the research topic.

Chapter 6 will include the researcher’s self-reflection throughout the process of this dissertation and include insight on her overall experience at the Dublin Business School.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 French Tourism & Economy

Whether looking for food, wine, beautiful countryside, or breathtaking architecture, there is no doubt that France is the world’s top tourist destination. In fact, according to a BBC article discussing the ‘world’s favourite holiday destination, France ranked first, ringing in 83 million visitors yearly. This ranking placed France in the lead by quite a large margin of 16 million visitors over runner-up country, the USA. (Carter, 2014)

France holds the second largest economy in Europe, second only to its economic partner Germany. (Kabundi and De Simone, 2007)

Tian and Mak argue that tourism has not officially been defined as an industry as it depends on the combined contributions of several standard industries (such as hotels, airlines, etc.). For this reason, they explain that it is difficult, but important that a country be able to distinguish tourism’s separate contribution to a country or region’s economy. (Tian and Mak et al., 2011) This should include not only the obvious industries that support tourism, but also the supporting industries, such as hotel cleaning services, food & beverage, and government support to programs serving the industry. Luckily, the European Commission and the World Travel and Tourism Council have implemented the use of an accounting framework named the Tourism Satellite Account, to gather statistics specifically reflecting the French tourism industry. (Statcan.gc.ca, 2011)

It was found that in 2012, Travel & Tourism’s total contribution to France’s GDP was €197.6 billion, equaling 9.7% of the total GDP. In terms of employment, the number of jobs supported by the industry equaled to 10.9% of France’s total employment. (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2013)

2.2 Global Tourism Online

The number of players becoming more and more active in online marketing and e-commerce is on the rise. A July 2013 article by Socialmedia Today states that there are approximately 199
airlines active on Twitter, with airline JetBlue in the lead with 2.1 million followers. Moreover, they explain that a recent study shows that the average traveler visits 22 websites in ‘multiple shopping sessions’ prior to finally booking a trip. Smartphone usage is becoming more important as well, with 40% of online travel related traffic coming from smartphones, and 44% of travelers use smartphones to look up travel related material whilst traveling. The power of on-the-go travel research or updating is enormous, and 70% of travelers update their Facebook profiles while on vacation.

Apart from the obvious interactions that go on between social media hubs for the purpose of entertainment, the influence and drive of planning and booking any trip is dominated by the information sources.

- 69% of travelers get their travel information from travel review websites,
- 57% listen to the suggestions of online travel agencies,
- 56% look to travel provider sites, and
- 43% get their information from word-of-mouth of friends and family

(Socialmediatoday.com, 2014)

Evidently, importance of e-commerce in tourism is growing rapidly, and the market has grown over 73% in the last five years. In 2012, online travel sales hit $162.4 billion, and in 2013 148.3 million travel bookings were made online and the numbers continue to rise (Statisticbrain.com, 2014). It would appear that many hotels would be happy with these statistics, as it seems that they have been able to make huge increases in profit over as short amount of time with guests booking through their websites. For some large hotel chains, this is the case as they have quite a great online following as well, and social media caters to their benefit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hyatt</th>
<th>Hilton</th>
<th>Marriott</th>
<th>Radisson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twitter followers</td>
<td>31.8k</td>
<td>129k</td>
<td>104k</td>
<td>6.3k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook likes</td>
<td>71k</td>
<td>4.7m</td>
<td>1.4m</td>
<td>93k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is not necessarily the case for small and medium sized enterprises (or SMEs) of which the better part of the industry is comprised of, and also houses 60% of the hotel industry’s jobs. In the case of SMEs, their smaller business models, limited resources, and sometimes lack of proper business management have allowed them to slip behind the learning curve of online marketing optimization. In the case of France, one third of all hotels are “family” run businesses, employing fewer than 10 people. As the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development) explains,

“The globalization of tourism and the resulting increase in competition and the changing patterns of the demand are pushing OECD tourism enterprises to adapt, especially in those countries that have traditionally received the greatest tourism inflows.” (OECD, 2010)

It also goes on to explain that travel agency businesses are on the rise. And while 65% of global hotel bookings made online in 2013 were booked through brand websites, the remaining 35% of hotels were booked through commission collecting merchants and retail websites. Moreover, most of the 65% who booked directly through hotel brands went to large corporations such as Hilton and Marriott. This indicates two major problems for the vast majority of hotels:
1) they rely on third party intermediaries to carry out their bookings
2) the 65% of clients who do book directly with hotels are only booking with megabrands

Therefore, though the Internet has proven an innovative tool to increase commerce in tourism, the majority of hotels are not necessarily benefiting as much as they should. (OECD, 2010)

2.3 Online Travel: The Website vs. The Consumer

Online travel and booking websites and review sites play a very important role in the developing online tourism community of today. In fact, there are so many reasons that these
websites are important, from how a consumer lands upon the websites, to the moment of purchase and everything in between. For the purpose of this research paper, the most important factors of an online travel booking website to examine are the following:

1) How the consumer arrives at the page
2) Their purpose for being there (just browsing or buying?)
3) Point of Purchase

These are most important, as sheer traffic is not really an indicator’s of the website’s success nor ability to sell the services it is advertising. It does not explain e-traveller’s consumption habits as some may just be browsing to gather information before deciding on booking a trip at a much later date.

That said, Park and Chung were able to utilize an internet data tracking method called “clickstream data” to track and analyze the path a consumer takes throughout their website, and see if it results in a purchase or not. Also, they noted that the website from which people originated helped them come to their conclusion.

The figure below indicates the process of the conceptual development of an e-traveler’s purchase and decision-making. (Park and Chung, 2009, pp. 1451--1463)
Park and Chung concluded that non-website transferred visitors (or those who directly inputted the URL to their final destination), were more likely to purchase, spent more time on the site, and viewed less pages. The reverse effect was true for those who were transferred to the same destination site from another website, and they spent less time on the site, viewed more pages, and did not purchase. Park and Chung’s research was conducted on a search engine booking website type theory.

The following is a sample of some of the referring and destination websites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referring Websites</th>
<th>Destination Websites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search Engines: google.com, msn.com, yahoo.com, aol.com</td>
<td>Travel Websites: expedia.com, hotwire.com, travelnow.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: americanexpress.com, iwon.com</td>
<td>Airline Websites: southwest.com, jetblueairways.com, aa.com, delta.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Car Rental Sites: Alamo.com, hetz.com, dollar.com, nationalcar.com, thrifty.com</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study also concluded another theory that if website managers were more involved then more browsers would have resulted in purchases. They mention that those who do purchase are
already equipped with the information they needed, whereas many browsers did not have guidance to lead them to their desired product and therefore had a low situational involvement with the website.

(Park and Chung, 2009, pp. 1451–1463)

The importance of a study such as this is to determine the intent and cause of consumer purchasing based on involvement with the site. However, as noted, a lack of managerial or direction on a website with perhaps many different destinations and options can be confusing to a consumer.

Hsieh and Chen, however, use a mathematical theory called the Grey Relational Theory in which certain aspects of a service are cross examined with the needs and wants of the consumers to determine which are the most important factors for the service to focus on. In this case, Hsieh and Chen explore customer relationship management of the travel websites. In their study, there are a number of notable findings. The most important customer service factors of travel websites are listed below and ranked 1 to 7, with one being of the highest importance to travelers. (Hsieh and Chen, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Import Customer Services Factors for Online Travel Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Flexible business processing (i.e. number of payment methods accepted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Actively thinking for customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Fast service speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Attitude of website service personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Number of mistakes made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Convenience of services provided by linked websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Website design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Reasonable prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Convenient service locations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: “Most Import Customer Services Factors for Online Travel Sites” (Hsieh and Chen, 2009)
Hsieh and Chen believe that by following this model, and by applying this theory, managerial operations can focus on the areas that need improvement to bring in more customers to the travel websites.

However, though Hsieh and Chen may have theorized a good starting point for running a travel website business, many consumers are still unhappy with both travel booking websites, and travel review websites where they visit to gain information on their trip to help them determine where to go, how to book, where to stay, where to eat, and every other aspect of their voyage.

**2.4 Traveler Reliance in Online Content**

The most well known website to gain access to online travel reviews is currently TripAdvisor.com. The website itself advertises that it contains more than 150 million reviews, has more than 3.7 million businesses and properties listed, and more than 82 million people have downloaded the various TripAdvisor apps. Most notably, 90% of the travel questions posted to their forums are posted in English, and most are replied to within 24 hours of initial posting. (Tripadvisor.com, 2014)

A 2007 study by the Laboratory for Intelligent Systems in Tourism sampled 1480 users of TripAdvisor.com to study what they consider credible content, and what motivates them to interact with the online travel review website. (Laboratory for Intelligent Systems in Tourism, 2007)

37.8% of the respondents took 3-4 pleasure trips in the last 12 months, and a huge portion of the sampled audience, 96.4% of all the traveling respondents respondents; plan their trip via Internet sources. Only 2.7% of respondents did not take pleasure trips in the last 12 months.
Not only does this study show the importance of Internet presence for travel providers, but it also determined that 67% of those surveyed liked to plan their travel details well in advance. Specifically, almost 45% of them begin their trip planning four or more months prior to
departure. In terms of demographics, nearly 50% of those surveyed were aged 26 – 49 years, with almost 43% aged 50 – 64 years of age. The Laboratory for Intelligent Systems claims this to be a very good and accurate demographic to target for tourism and they state that this is because they travel frequently and are highly involved in the planning of their trips.

In fact, they also concluded that because this demographic group travels frequently, they are more receptive to travel-related information. Back on the topic of reviews, consumer generated content is useful. In fact, of all the reasons to search for reviews, hotels ranked the highest. 77% of these respondents deemed reviews an important factor for deciding where to stay.

![Importance of Travel Reviews for Travel-Related Decisions](image)

Figure 7: “Importance of Travel Reviews” (pg. 13, Laboratory for Intelligent Systems in Tourism, 2007)

At the same time, though many travelers get their information from review websites like Trip Advisor, and although they may book with 3rd party intermediaries, many people would rather the opportunity to book directly with the supplier. A 2010 report by Starkov and Price
states that 69% of US travelers travelling for pleasure prefer to book with the hotel, whereas only 27% prefer to book with intermediaries. (Starkov and Price, 2003)

They state that Internet penetration rates are higher among the younger demographic, but that website traffic is not to be confused with profit. The intermediary sites are certainly on the rise, however, reasons why US travelers buy travel products online are varied. According to Starkov and Price, there are three major reasons that people buy online:

• 85.8% buy online for convenience
• 83.6% buy online because it’s easier to compare prices
• 68.5% buy online for the lower prices

However, buying online solely for the purpose of price is not the penultimate factor in the decision making of the buyer. In fact, Starkov and Price conclude that people prefer to buy directly from the hotel retailer for a number of reasons that might otherwise go unthought-of if in the process of buying online. The reasons that they concluded to play major factors in a person’s willingness to buy online versus reluctance to buy online are:

• 41% of those studied had concerns about security
• 40% had concerns about personal information
• 39% claimed it easier to buy off-line
• 31% feared that their reservation would not be processed properly
• 25% claim it’s faster to book off-line
• 25% say it’s too difficult to change a reservation online
• 24% recognize internet prices may not be the lowest
• 20% say they get better prices offline
  (Starkov and Price, 2003)

Therefore, Starkov and Price realize that there are many people willing to buy offline because of several factors such as security, better pricing, more trust, etc. but may not do so in the end because of the three major convenience factors that the online booking solution
provides. Hence, it is crucial that a hotel be able to reform their booking policy to be able to implement these deciding factors that will lead to more direct sales.

Finally, Starkov and Price ask hotels how their company fares against their competitors in the online community. They indicate that most hotels are already well behind their proactive competitor and that hotels should invest in e-commerce and e-business consultants to develop a direct-to-consumer marketing and distribution strategy. The indicate that this is not only to reach consumers on a personal basis, but also to remain active and in the online community enough to preserve brand integrity and not be obligated to lower prices because of the deals being offered elsewhere online by 3rd part intermediary websites.

“The direct-to-consumer model should become the foundation, the centerpiece of any hotel company’s online distribution strategy. It provides the hotel with long-term competitive advantages and lessens dependence on intermediaries, discounters and traditional channels about to become obsolete.” (Starkov and Price, 2003)

More specifically, Europeans traveling for business have also shown a preference for booking hotels directly with the service provider. France ranked as first business destination in a 2012 report by ACCOR, one of the world’s leading hotel providers. (ACCOR, 2012) According ACCOR, 43% of European business travelers book hotels directly online through the hotel website, and 33% via an online travel agency. Business travelers are often leading busy lives and enjoy the online booking process because it is practical, easy, and provides instant confirmation. Moreover, they particularly enjoy looking at the hotel amenities, services provided, to see pictures or videos of the rooms, and read other customers’ comments.
Top 5 reasons for booking online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICAL</th>
<th>INSTANT CONFIRMATION</th>
<th>EASIER TO MANAGE</th>
<th>ACCESS TO SPECIAL OFFERS</th>
<th>CAN CHECK HOTEL SERVICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<td>58%</td>
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<td>46%</td>
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<td>71%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: “Top 5 Reasons for Booking Online” (ACCOR, 2012)

Other interesting and notable information collected by the ACCOR report is that one in two business travelers count free Wi-Fi as a determining factor for booking a hotel. Also, staff courtesy and professionalism, quality of bathroom facilities, and comfortable bed were ranked high as determining factors that are sought out online before booking a hotel. An astonishing 60% of those surveyed indicated that they would really like to see hotels providing media/news papers/magazines/TV channels from their country as well. Meanwhile, if they have a bad experience, 64% of European business travelers prefer to write the hotel directly in writing than waste their time publishing commentaries on social media or review sites. (ACCOR, 2012)

From this section of information, we can see that traveler reliance on online content varies depending on the traveler’s intention or reason for travel. Leisure travelers spend more time picking and searching for great deals on hotels, writing reviews, reading comments, etc., whereas the typical European business traveler will be less likely to dig deeply online to look for deals, care about social media commentary, and overall simply care about certain amenities such as Wi-Fi, access to media from their home country, and the actual hotel’s website usefulness.
2.5 What’s the Catch?: 3rd Party Intermediaries

There is a lot of controversy surrounding the topic of using 3rd party intermediaries or as some people refer to them as OTAs (Online Travel Agencies). Some marketers do not believe that 3rd party intermediaries use their online presence correctly, that they exploit hotels, and they give false information to travelers.

A 2013 book by chef and tourism marketing specialist Rémi Ohayon titled Addi(c)tion states that in the beginning many hotels accepted working with travel agents as it was customary at the time to have this type of 3rd party sales agreement. Ohayon states that in this case, however, the commission gains by travel agents at 7%-10% were completely justifiable, as the travel agents would book travelers to hotels, which they themselves had visited. This allowed travel agents to vouch accurately for the hotel and created a greater sense of trust between the hotel and the agent, and the agent and the consumer, bringing all elements closer together. Ohayon says that now these 3rd party websites host any type of hotel or accommodation under the sun, their agents are not able to vouch of these hotels as they have never visited them, and on top of it all they collect a 15%-30% commission on each hotel booking. (Ohayon, Mesplède and Bouquier, 2013)

Ohayon states that, in France, culturally hotel owners are already used to paying for results. However, the results they pay for are engrained to be delivered by travel agents who collect their commission percentage, and who also get free stays in the hotel so as to be able to accurately market it. Ohayon believes a shift in perspective is needed for these hotel owners in order to stay in the game with the growing competition. Still, hotel owners are skeptical about investing in their own websites to improve direct sales, and look always towards intermediaries to do their work. What they need to remember, states Ohayon, is that the industry has changed and the travel agents they once knew by name are no longer.

Ohayon goes on to describe different ways in which 3rd party intermediaries cut corners, lie to consumers, and work their way around making an extra euro. For instance, Ohayon describes how intermediary website advertise hotel fares ‘starting at’ prices, only to find out that in reality
it will cost exorbitantly more once fees are paid and booking minimums are met. (Ohayon, Mesplède and Bouquier, 2013)

A 2013 study conducted by Ohayon and 615 French hotel restaurants reveals that 60% of them have a contract with a 3rd party intermediary booking website. 55% of these pay 15%-20% of the booking in commissions to the online booking website.

The reasons these French hotels use 3rd party intermediaries are as follows:

- 83% to increase amount of bookings
- 68% to increase brand visibility
- 65% to find new clients
- 11% to get last minute bookings
- 10% for promotional campaigning

After paying their contract fees and paying out their commissions, the success results are as follows:

- 7% saw a significant increase in sales
- 45% saw a satisfactory increase in sales
- 47% saw a less than satisfactory increase in sales
- 12% saw an unsatisfactory increase in sales

(Addiction.travel, 2013)

Ohayon concludes that the reality is that these 3rd party intermediaries are incredibly internet-savvy. They are present on all the top social media platforms, they run their own blogs, they post relevant travel information and material, and engage the customer on a level that is not purely sales. Ohayon suggests that hotel owners and marketers need to get smart and invest in their own online marketing schemes to not get swallowed up by the intermediaries as what might indefinitely become a reality for many hotels who do not adhere to the changes in the tourisme industry’s landscape. (Ohayon, Mesplède and Bouquier, 2013)
Getting involved in social media platforms like Google+ is important. Google+ allows the linking of all google accounts like gmail, youtube, google places, that can be beneficial to stabilizing a brand. Europeans spend an average of 27 hours per month on the Internet, and 22.5% of that on social media websites like Google+, Twitter, and Facebook. (Ohayon, Mesplède and Bouquier, 2013)

A marketing trend report of 2012 by Swiss hotelier, Rene Heyer takes a look into the rise of online travel agents (what he calls OTAs) or 3rd party intermediaries. Heyer believes there are 5 key areas that every hotel marketer should focus on in the coming years.

Make the most of visual merchandising on 3rd party travel websites

Almost 50% of all Internet hotel bookings are made online. Therefore, having your website simply appear on the intermediary website is not enough to have booked. Investing in visual merchandising is the way to draw attention to the hotel and brand, claims Heyer. He also mentions that almost 20% of all hotel bookings are made through intermediaries while the majority is still being made through hotel branded sites. However, Heyer explains that hotels should not rely on intermediaries for their bookings, nor should they completely try to cut them out. More importantly, they should use them as an outlet to promote their hotel brand, and yes, bring in some bookings. However, the point is to gain a bigger reach by using intermediaries, but that also means more competition. (Heyer, 2012)

Heyer stresses that hotels using intermediary sites should provide visually compelling material to the reader, pictures, detailed descriptions of the property written in the language of the buyer or at least the language of e-commerce, that being primarily English. They should also respond to reviews, especially the negative ones, and in the language of the traveler’s review. (Heyer, 2012)

High growth of mobile

With smartphone applications and accessibility on the rise, hotel marketers need to look toward providing information in a mobile accessible format. Tablet users spend 20% more than computer users, and 50% more than smartphone users, and 90% of all mobile shopping revenue comes from Apple iPad users. Mobile spending will continue to increase as more and more
people begin to become comfortable with the idea of making purchases over the internet, and also the rise in secure payment options such as PayPal. Heyer suggests that hotel marketers look into the development of online services, customizable to each traveler’s needs whether it be by language, bookmarking, contacting, etc. Essentially, hotel marketers need to give travelers the option to book with them from whichever device they prefer.

**Surging social media**

According to Heyer, 92% of travelers say they trust word-of-mouth/opinions of people they know have already stayed at that particular hotel rather than any other type of advertising. Ramping up social media involvement is a great way to engage with customers on what will feel more to them as a personal level of involvement. (Heyer, 2012) As mentioned before, 70% of travelers update their Facebook status while on vacation, they post photos, etc., and hotels should be able to provide these travelers with a contact on their favourite social website. Hotels should also engage in sharing, liking photos, posting relevant travel information, but not solely berate potential consumers with promotional offers and sales information.

**Capturing corporate travel opportunities**

Heyer realizes that an economic instability has lead many corporate travelers to look to the internet to find booking deals, or easy booking for time saving purposes. This is a growing platform and providing intercontinental or international business travelers with Wi-Fi, effective visuals, and content-rich website information in their language are key factors in achieving direct bookings from corporate travelers.

**Content-rich web marketing**

In every area of web marketing there should be a level of rich content, however, this is what Heyer considers to be the most crucial and important aspect to maintain direct consumers who book directly with the hotel, and to maintain a good presence on the intermediaries without relying on them for communication.

“As users engage across multiple platforms and devices, cross-channel consistency and optimization is key...Users expect relevant, targeted content...75% of marketers state that compelling content is a factor in closing sales...” (Heyer, 2012)
Therefore it is not necessarily that intermediaries should be completely expelled to gain more profit, but that since many travelers prefer to book directly with the hotel, the hotel should be able to provide them with the same services provided by the intermediaries to remain competitive, and not fall into relying on intermediaries for all their online business as the intermediaries will not uphold the hotel brand, communicate with the customer the way the hotel would, and also take commissions. (Heyer, 2012)

The following diagram by Enrique indicates relevant and useful steps that one could take towards online content marketing. (Enrique, 2013)

![Content Attracts & Engages](image)

**Figure 9:** “Content Marketing” (Enrique, 2013)

Here the figure shows that the steps of online marketing begin with awareness move through consumer consideration of the product, this leads to purchase, and then companies need to work on retention and advocacy to secure a relationship. Throughout there are various steps that marketers can use to work towards this. (Enrique, 2013) As Heyer had mentioned previously, content-rich marketing leads to the creation of a lasting relationship is well maintained. The customer lifecycle for online marketing can be seen here.
2.6 English as an Online Global Language

“If you want to take full advantage of the Internet, there is only one way to do it: learn English” (Barton and Lee, 2013)

The Internet began in the United States, where English is the official language, and grew from there. With the globalization of the Internet, the users have become more diverse. In fact, there are more Chinese and Spanish native speakers currently using the Internet, however, they still tend to communicate and do business in English on the Internet. (Barton and Lee, 2013)

As of 2010, English was the number one language used for communication on the Internet.

Top Ten Languages in the Internet
2010 - in millions of users

Figure 10: “Top 10 Languages of the Internet” (Internetworldstats.com, 2014)
English has become the global language of commerce. Companies worldwide have adopted English into their corporate strategy, and many even integrate a mandatory English course for employees. Well known companies, such as, Airbus, Daimler-Chrysler, Fast Retailing, Nokia, Renault, Samsung, SAP, Technicolor, and Microsoft in Beijing now use English as their common corporate language. (Neeley, 2012)

Tourism and English

According to a 2011 journal entitled Anglophone Hegemony in Tourism Studies Today, tourism finds itself with English as a global language because those who study tourism are, for the most part, English speakers. In fact, the journal states that of 4587 tourism researches from 119 countries, 51.5% are English speakers. (Dann, 2011)

As mentioned previously in the literature, of over 150 million reviews posted to Tripadvisor.com, 90% of questions posted in their forums are written in English. (Tripadvisor.com, 2014) Lonely Planet’s French website receives an average of 80 000 visitors per month, while it’s English counterpart receives 3 million visitors per month. (Pearse et al., 2014)

2.7 Summary

As noted in this literature review, France is the leading country for tourism and bringing in 83 million tourists per year. (Carter, 2014) Moreover, the tourism industry accounts for 9.7% of France’s GDP and provides 10.9% of France’s employment. (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2013)

65% of all hotel bookings made online in 2013 were booked through large brand websites, while the rest were booked through 3rd part intermediaries who collect an average of 20 – 30% in commissions off hotel bookings. (OECD, 2010)(Ohayon, 2013) 60% of French hotels rely on 3rd part intermediaries for bookings. (Ohayon, 2013)

69% of US travelers prefer to book directly with hotels, and 43% of European business travelers
do book directly with hotels. In both cases, they often feel obligated to book with 3rd party intermediaries for reasons such as: convenience, price comparison, lower prices, advertising, speed, etc. (Starkov and Price, 2003) (ACCOR, 2012)

The purpose of this research paper is to provide some recommendation to French hotel owners and marketers on how to promote their business to the English speaking market by providing relevant and engaging rich content in online promotion.
Chapter 3 - Research Methods

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the approaches to the research paper will be analyzed, and determined. This chapter aims to uncover all of the available or relevant approaches to the nature of the research paper, and analyze the significance each approach has on the research objectives. An analysis of the different research methods to be considered will be taken from Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill’s Research methods for business students (5th Edition, 2009). Based on the research objectives, each strategy, philosophy, approach, and data collection tactic will be chosen in relation to how well each approach relates to the objectives.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is important to the facilitation of research methods of study as it helps the researcher uncover, interpret and develop knowledge and findings. Research philosophy is important to the foundation of study, as it gives the researcher points of view and reference on how to approach the world, market, and realities they wish to study. Saunders et al. (2009) explains that the assumptions determined by research philosophy will then validate the basis for the researcher’s methods and strategy selection (Saunders et al., 2009).

The most important approaches to choosing a research philosophy are explained in the book “Research Methods for Business Students”, Saunders et al. (2009). They are scientific theories that essentially pose three major questions to the researcher before they embark on choosing the right philosophical theory for their research (Engle, 2009). Moreover, Johnson and Clark (2006) argue that the importance of philosophy for the purpose of this study is more so to guide reflection on our philosophical choices and defend them in relation to the alternatives we could have adopted, and not so much based on how well the researcher is philosophically informed. (John and Clark, Saunders et al., 2009, p.108)

Therefore, by posing the following three questions and applying them to your research question, one should be able to decipher which philosophical approach is most suitable for their study.

- **Ontology:** What is the nature of being?
- **Epistemology:** What is truth?
Axiology: What are our fundamental values?

For the purpose of this study, an epistemological approach will be taken as the research leads towards a discovery of the truth behind the importance of becoming globally marketable and utilizing the English language of e-commerce in French tourism. Next, an additional philosophical tool will be utilized to help solidify the epistemological influence. The following tools are called paradigms, and they help to examine social phenomena, and will lead to a better understanding of the study’s philosophical foundation. Below are three paradigms that can be considered for this study:

- **Positivism:** According to the positivist ontology there is a single, external and objective reality to any research question regardless of the researchers belief (Carson et al. 1988; Hudson and Ozanne 1988). Therefore, if the researcher follows the principles of Positivism, researchers must adhere to specifically structures beliefs to uncover single, objective realities through value-free research. The goal of this type of research is to make both time and value-free generalizations.

- **Interpretivism:** The interpretivist goal of their research is to understand and interpret human behaviours, as opposed to predicting causes and effects. In this type of research, it is of the utmost importance that researchers recognize subjective experiences, reasons, meanings, and motives that affect the time and context bound studies.

- **Realism:** Realism shares the principles of both positivism and interpretivism. This means that realism combines the two philosophies and researchers with a realist approach will combine both the viewpoints of a reality that exists apart from human behaviour, but also that to understand people one must accept human subjectivity. Researchers must identify the external factors and forces that influence humans, as well as how they interpret and perceive the setting they find themselves in.

**Philosophical Approach to Dissertation**

For the purpose of this dissertation, an interpretivist paradigm will be used. Interpretivist research is supposed to be generated from value-laden socially constructed interpretations. Due to the nature of the tourism industry being built up upon the social realities perceived and founded by humans, the nature of this study is interpretivist and aims to focus on the importance of travelers’ experiences to come to its conclusion.
In data collection, both qualitative and quantitative research will be based on informants’ perceptions, ideas, and viewpoints on the structure of the tourism industry in which they take part in, their experiences in visited hotels, their service expectations, and how they choose to purchase their travel and accommodations and why.

### 3.3 Research Approach

As explained by Saunders et al., although the study’s approach will be made clear by the end and in the conclusions, by making theoretical choices clear from the beginning helps to define the design of the research project. Two different approaches, deduction and induction, will be considered for this study.

**Deduction:** where research can only be predicted by natural sciences and laws which can assume or prove the anticipated research outcomes, and thus be controlled (Collins and Hussey, 2003, Saunders et al., 2009, p. 124)

In 2002, Robson described the processes of deduction, or the “testing theory”, by the following five stages:

- Hypothesizing a testable proposition between concepts or variables
- Defining how the concepts or variables will be measured
- Testing the hypothesis
- Examining outcomes
- Modifying theory based on findings


**Induction:** builds theory based on past research, data analysis, informant experiences/opinions, and conclusions. Typically, researchers will focus on qualitative data as it is important that they establish different views and approaches on the phenomena of study.

(Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, Saunders et al., 2009, p. 126)
For the purpose of this dissertation, and for the nature of marketing, it is most suitable to use an **inductive** approach, as examining opinion-based data for tourism will be opinion based. Moreover, it will be useful to utilize and build some theory on past studies in this area of focus, which will help lead the study’s line of questioning later on. Furthermore, as the researcher is not an expert on this field of study, it would be quite impossible to deliver an accurate concluding theory based on research of both qualitative and quantitative nature, without having some background information. Here, the literature review will be very important as the researcher will base many questions for informants based on the content of the literature review, which will influence, inspire, and hopefully guide the study in such a way that accurate data collection will be performed. Furthermore, as pointed out by Saunders et al., it would not be feasible to use a deductive approach with an interpretivist paradigm as deduction relates best to positivism, being science and physical reality based (Saunders et al., 2009). Therefore, the purpose of choosing induction as an approach is quite sensible, as the nature of the research requires:

- Some information on past studies (literature review)
- Data collected based on opinion, perception, and subjective views of informants.
- Some quantitative data, still opinion based, but taken from a quote sampling of news network audience
This form is true to Saunders et al.’s (2009) approach to exploratory research, whereby the majority of the dissertation will be based on material discovered throughout the study.

3.4 Research Strategy

Saunders et al. (2009) provides seven very different research strategies that all usually lean to one side of induction or deduction. They are: experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research. However, some of the strategies can be used for both approaches. For the purpose of this study, an ethnographic strategy will be used, and will be accompanied by the survey strategy in the case of the quantitative data.

**Ethnographical strategy** is the most suitable for the majority of the research in this dissertation as it is rooted firmly in the inductive approach (Saunders et al., 2009). This requires the researcher to fully immerse themselves into the world of the field of study. By getting closer to the French tourism market, this type of strategy will be most effective.

The way in which the survey portion will be used is to help the researcher understand the likes, dislikes, needs, and demand of the Anglophone French tourism base. This will still have some ethnographic tendencies, as the survey aims to define and support the social reality the informants of the ethnographic strategy inhabit.

Both of these strategies should compliment one another and result in well-rounded, information-rich research.

3.5 Research Choice

Simply put, quantitative data generates numerical data (usually via tools such as; questionnaires, graphs or statistics), and qualitative data generates non-numerical data (such as; interviews), which often uncover perceptions or other variables of the phenomena being studied (Saunders et al., 2009)
For the purpose of this study, a mixed methods approach will be taken as the study is using both a survey and ethnographic strategy.

As explained by Curran and Blackburn (2001), the choice of combining both qualitative and quantitative data is increasingly advocated within business and management research. (Curran and Blackburn, 2001, Saunders et al., 2009, p. 151)

This is further supported by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), who argue that multiple methods are useful as they provide better opportunity for answering research questions, and also evaluate the extent to which findings can be trusted and conclusions made from them (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003, Saunders et al., 2009, p. 153)

### 3.6 Time Horizon

Deciding the time horizon approach for researchers means they must decide whether they would like a snapshot view of their study (i.e. a moment in a particular time), or do they want it to appear diary-like (where the study appears as a representation of snapshots over a given period of time. These two methods are called cross-sectional and longitudinal.

In the case of cross-sectional, it is the most common method seen used and the study is based on a particular event of which single data collection is done to gather a sample.

In comparison, longitudinal requires much more time and effort as it has the ability to change and develop because it is based on how areas of the study can change and evolve over time.
For the purpose of this dissertation, a cross-sectional method will have to be taken as it is an academic paper and meets time restraints that prevent the researcher from developing a long-standing ability to survey outcomes over a long period of time, however, the survey may ask questions pertaining to past travel information that may span a length of time depending on the person answering.

### 3.7 Data Collection

Data collection is not simply based on whether or not the researcher is using quantitative or qualitative data. In contrary, there are many other factors that go into data collection and the most important factors to any research paper are credibility based on: **reliability** and **validity** (Saunders et al., 2009)

Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) argues that reliability is based on the extent to which data collection techniques and procedures will result in consistent findings (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, Saunders et al., 2009, p. 156)

Viability refers to whether findings are actually about what they appear to be about. This means that sometimes, research may uncover information that is skewed and seems to give an answer to the question, but really those given the questionnaire did not have the proper information to give an accurate response, and lead to misleading results (Saunders et al., 2009).

This research paper and all surveys avoid asking leading questions by doing its best to ask varying questions that do not give away the full nature and scope of the research.

#### 3.7.1 Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data is collected from external sources. This could include: academic or organizations’ books, journals, reports, articles, surveys, archives, and governmental reports.

For this study, most secondary data will come from the Dublin Business School library database.
Secondary data focuses on primary research that has already been conducted, and that can be applied to the researcher’s study for background information and to support findings.

This is important as it helps the researcher in finding preexisting trends, gives insight, and provides understanding or an overview, which is particularly important if the researcher is not an expert of the field (Saunders et al., 2009)

Unfortunately, the quality and variety of secondary data depends on what is already available. Therefore, the researcher should not simply use whatever is available, but also evaluate the secondary data’s place in the study. This can be done by using the following from three-stage process found in Saunders et al., (2009)

![Figure 13: “Process of Analyzing Data”](Saunders et. al., 2009)

3.7.2 Primary Data Collection

Primary data is data collected by the researcher through means of primary research. For this study, this includes the use of both qualitative and quantitative research.

Specifically, the researcher will perform semi-structured interviews for the qualitative segment with web marketing professionals and hotel managers in the French tourism industry. For
quantitative, the researcher plans to create a survey that will be a snowball sampling to generate data using the social networking websites that aid as driving forces in the tourism industry itself. Moreover, snowball sampling for this particular research method allows for the researcher to uncover any hidden populations in mainly Anglophone-targeted respondent-driven sampling.

This is because when choosing sampling techniques, the researcher must decide between probability sampling, which samples the whole of a population and generates statistical results, and non-probability sampling, which involves generating a general sample of the population, but cannot guarantee to answer the research question based on the entirety of the population.

Snowball sampling is a derivative of non-probability sampling, and is most efficient for the purpose of this study, as the researcher’s own Anglophone sampling reach will hit citizens from the following countries: Canada, United States of America, Australia, United Kingdom, Ireland.

Due to the multi-cultural nature of these English speaking countries, it is also likely that although targeting English speaking internet users/travelers, the researcher will get some responses from people that do not necessarily speak English as a first language, but do use it when traveling or navigating the internet.
3.7.3 Data Analysis

After the data is collected from qualitative research, the researcher will analyze the responses based on their relativity and relevance to the research question. It is important that the questions asked in the primary research all be specifically tailored to generate the most accurate results.

In the case of the quantitative snowball sampling, once the audience has responded and the data has been collected, the researcher will draw conclusions on the sample population based on their responses and commentaries. Then, the sections of the data will be presented and analyzed in diagrams or charts.

3.8 Population and Sample

3.8.1 Qualitative

As previously mentioned, the qualitative data is drawn from Anglophone consumers of the French hotel industry. These people will provide in depth information on the traveler’s demographic, frequency or reason for traveling to France, experience booking hotels, experience staying in hotels, and gives their opinion on how their culture views France. Also, hotel managers will be interviewed from three French hotels to give some perspective of the hotel’s point of view. All respondents will remain anonymous throughout the research paper, and will therein after be referred to as Consumer 1, Consumer 2, Consumer 3, and Hotel Manager 1, Hotel Manager 2, Hotel Manager 3. The aim is to draw conclusions on the French tourism industry to better implement the use of English web marketing to benefit hotels in France.

For consumers, a semi-structured interview process will be used and their profiles are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Location &amp; Nationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer 1</td>
<td>25-year-old</td>
<td>Toronto, Ontario CANADA Canadian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 15: “Semi-Structured Interview Informants”

For the hotels, a structured interview process will be used, as the same questions will be asked of each to gain a more coherent response. Their profiles are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Area of Expertise</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Manager 1</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Paris, 75000 Iles-de-France FRANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Manager 2</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Lyon, 69003 Rhône-Alpes FRANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Manager 3</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Strasbourg, 67000 Alsace FRANCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16: “Structured Interview Informants”

3.8.2 Quantitative

As mentioned prior a snowball approach was used for this research paper and had 138 respondents from the following countries:

Canada, United States of America, Australia, United Kingdom, Ireland.

The design of the questionnaire in integral to generating the most accurate response. The population sample may be there, however, the proper questions are not asked because the
researcher has not done the proper work in designing the questionnaire, the results may be skewed or not answer the research question (Saunders et al., 2009)

Therefore, the process in which the questionnaire must be designed can be seen below

![Diagram of questionnaire design process]

Figure 17: “Structuring Research” (Saunders et al., 2009)

This process is essential in developing a quality questionnaire to determine the true outcomes of the study.
3.9 Ethical Issues

Some ethical issues that could arise are confidentiality. The researcher wants each respondent to feel comfortable in answering personal information about their traveling habits, their spending habits, and even their opinions on their own culture. Also, hotel managers will be interviewed so confidentiality is key as they will be disclosing information about the hotel's success and advertising strategy. For this purpose, all respondents shall remain anonymous.

Though the general ethical issues in Saunders et al. (2009) list issues such as, causing pain or harm to participants (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 185), the purpose of this data collection will risk only breaching confidentiality terms. Therefore, it is necessary that the researcher take precautions in asking controversial questions, and that the parties be fully informed of the objective of this research paper before commencing the interviews. By disclosing the nature of the research, the researcher does risk having interviewees withdraw from the study; however, deception is an ethical issue that cannot be risked by the researcher either. Once data has been collected, it is important that the researcher keep the data secure.
3.10 Limitations of the Research

Limitations to this research study vary and are dependent on several factors. As the researcher aims to uncover; how and if the English language can be better utilized in the online promotion of French hotels.

Limitations may include:
- Distance
- Neglectful informants
- Finances
- Time constraints

Furthermore, it will be impossible to determine the exact point of view of every traveler to France it will be impossible to interview every English speaking person who has stayed in a French hotel. Therefore, only assumptions can be made and generalized based on the data and information collected over the period of time granted to complete this dissertation.
Chapter 4 – Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the main data points and theories observed throughout this research paper. This section is extremely important as it encompasses the most important information from which the researcher will draw their conclusion and recommendations in Chapter 5.

4.2 Observations

4.2.1 Survey Observations

As mentioned prior, 140 people from English speaking countries were surveyed using a snowball survey method. Countries of origin for the respondents are as follows: Canada, United States of America, Australia, United Kingdom, Ireland. It is to be noted that not all 140 replied to every question on the survey, but that shall be indicated upon each observation. Furthermore, selections of the questions answered were used for the purpose of this paper and some findings were deemed irrelevant and thus excluded from this data analysis.
4.2.1.1 Online Tourism Data

Figure 18: “Age Demographic”

Figure 18 shows that the 60% or the majority of respondents were in the 21 to 29 age bracket, followed by 14% of respondents sitting in the 30 to 39 age bracket. 140 respondents answered this question.
What is your first language or mother-tongue?

Answered: 140  Skipped: 1

- English
- French
- Mandarin
- Spanish
- Japanese
- Portuguese
- Italian
- German
- Arabic
- Russian
- Korean
- Hindustani
- Bengali
- Malay-Indonesian
- Other (please specify)
Figure 19: “Mother-tongue Statistics”

Figure 19 shows that 68% of respondents consider English as their first language, with French sitting in second at 11.4%. 140 respondents answered this question.
What language do you mainly use to do business online? (to search products/services, buy products/services, get detailed information on products/services)

Answered: 140  Skipped: 1

English
French
Mandarin
Spanish
Japanese
Portuguese
Italian
German
Arabic
Russian
Korean
Hindustani
Bengali
Malay-Indonesian
Other (please specify)
Figure 20: “Language of e-Commerce”

Figure 20 shows that 91.4% of respondents primarily use English to do business online. 140 respondents answered this question.

Figure 21: “Language of Tourism”

Figure 21 shows that when asked what language they would attempt to communicate in first when visiting a country where English is not the first language, 73% of respondents said they would first try to communicate in English with locals of that place. Many of those who
picked the ‘other (please specify)’ option mentioned they would first try to communicate in the official language of the country they were visiting. 140 respondents answered this question.

![Bar chart showing travel frequency]

**Figure 22: “Travel Averages”**

Figure 22 shows how often respondents travel yearly. 47.1% say they travel 2 to 4 times per year, followed by 26.4% who say they travel once per year. 140 respondents answered this question.
Figure 23 shows the average yearly international travel of respondents. 54% say they travel internationally at least once per year, and 33% travel internationally 2 to 4 times per year. 4.3% say they travel internationally 5 to 10 times per year, and about 3.5% more than 10 times per year. Only 5.7% of respondents claim they never travel. 140 respondents answered this question.
Figure 24: “Travel Booked Online”

Figure 24 the number of respondents who have booked travel itineraries online. 91% of respondents answered ‘yes’, and 9% answered ‘no’. 133 respondents answered this question.
Figure 25 shows the number of respondents who have booked accommodations online. Here, 92% answered ‘yes’, and 8% answered ‘no’. 131 respondents answered this question.

When asked who they booked with online, 32% answered that they booked directly through the hotel, and the remaining 68% booked through 3rd party intermediary websites. Specifically, Expedia.com ranked highest with 43.5%, Hotel.com had 33.6%, Booking.com 32.8%, and Tripadvisor.com with 28.2% all ranked highest.
Figure 26: “Destination Research Online”

Figure 26 shows that 97% of respondents answered ‘yes’ when asked if they have used the web to research information on their destination prior to booking their trip, only 3% responded ‘no’. 133 respondents answered this question.
Figure 27: “Hotel Research Online”

Figure 27 shows that 93% of respondents answered ‘yes’ when asked if they have used the web to research hotels prior to booking their accommodations, only 7% responded ‘no’. 133 respondents answered this question.
Figure 28: “Finding Hotel Information”

Figure 28 shows that when asked where they got the information on their hotel, 84% of respondents look to TripAdvisor for information on their accommodations. 24% also consults articles from blogs or news pages online, and 19% get information elsewhere on the Internet. 133 respondents answered this question.

Of these respondents, 70% claim they have made travel decisions based on the information they read in online reviews, and 20% say they have not but they would in the future.
Figure 29: “Hotel Websites in English”

Figure 29 shows that when asked if respondents have ever visited a hotel website that did not house English content, or had English content that was written poorly, 47% answered that this has happened to them, and 45% say it has not. 133 respondents answered this question.

If the hotel’s website was not available in English, 65% answered that they would look elsewhere online. However, 35% answered they would not look elsewhere online and when asked to elaborate, many respondents answered in a similar fashion to the following respondent responses:

“Waste of time.” Respondent 3/6/2014 9:00 PM


“If the site is not in English (or at least has the option to translate) I would have concerns about the ability to communicate with staff if I stayed there.” Respondent 3/4/2014 1:44 PM
“Too much trouble - if I had more time, maybe I would! But I never have.” Respondent 3/4/2014 1:36 PM

“I expect any tourism information on any site to have some type of English translation.” Respondent 3/4/2014 12:48 PM

“As English is the only language that I understand strongly, I prefer to get my information in English. It's the only way for me to be truly sure that I comprehend the information presented.” Respondent 3/1/2014 10:02 PM

“If the hotel’s website was not available in English I would assume their service are aimed geared toward people from a specific background, or the hotel staff don't have enough English to communicate effectively with me.” Respondent 2/28/2014 2:19 PM

“Better English seems more professional and trustworthy.” Respondent 2/28/2014 1:49 PM

“Because if they can’t write their website in English, their spoken English probably isn’t great either. I want to go somewhere where I can talk to people who work and live in the area.” Respondent 2/28/2014 9:32 AM
Figure 30: “Booking Hotels Directly”

Figure 30 shows that when asked if they had ever booked accommodations directly through a hotel website 54% of respondents answered ‘yes’ and 38.5% answered ‘no’, 8% of respondents say they have never traveled much. 129 respondents answered this question. 47 respondents commented on where they booked their hotel directly, and 28 all mentioned large brands such as Hilton, Holiday Inn, Ramada Inn, Marriott, Radisson, Sheraton, Hyatt, Ibis, and the Ritz. 11 said they did not remember the name of the hotel, and the remaining 8 mentioned local hotels.

Some respondents added extra comments:

“Many of them. I usually prefer to book with hotels directly as the offer better rates and can accommodate specific requests as type of bed, room location, parking etc.” Respondent 3/4/2014 5:59 PM

“Too many to list - Holiday Inn, Hilton, Sheraton. Most have "points" programs where points are collected only by booking through the hotel itself.” Respondent 3/4/2014 12:51 PM
“I always book Marriott they the direct website. I have status with them and get more perks this way.” Respondent 3/1/2014 4:36 PM

“Many hotels throughout France, often writing directly, almost always in French, to the proprietor of smaller establishments, which do not have "on-line" booking.” Respondent 3/5/2014 1:20 PM

![Chart showing willingness to book hotels directly](chart.png)

Figure 31: “Willingness to Book Hotels Directly”

Figure 31 shows that when asked if respondents would be more inclined to book directly with a hotel if they hotel offered the same pricing or value as the 3rd party intermediaries, 88.2% said that they would book directly with the hotel in this case. 9.5% said they still would not. 129 respondents answered this question.
Figure 32: “Trust in Online Booking”

Figure 32 shows that when asked who respondents were more likely to trust, the hotel or the intermediary online, 79% responded they were more likely to trust the official hotel website, and 21% said they trusted the intermediary more. 129 respondents answered this question.

Some commentaries by respondents on why they trust the 3rd party intermediaries are as follows:

“Because 3rd Party services offer better deals, are focused on online business”. Respondent 2/28/2014 4:05 PM

“They seem to offer better deals.” Respondent 2/28/2014 12:27 PM

“I’ve used 3rd party for the last 10 years.” Respondent 2/28/2014 9:09 AM
“Access to off market promotions perhaps Also on stop shopping (check multiple accommodation site simultaneously).” Respondent 2/28/2014 1:38 PM

Below are some commentaries by those respondents who claim they trust official hotel websites more than 3rd party intermediaries:

“I never think that I am getting the best deal with 3rd party agencies because their profit obviously has to come from somewhere, so I assume that's me.. and I don't like two organizations to profit from my wallet. I'd prefer to eliminate the middle man.” Respondent 2/28/2014 1:51 PM

“More direct, and if there's a problem with the booking I wouldn't be in a situation where one would though the blame ball to the other "oh, that's not our fault, that's because you booked with 3rdparty" + "that's not our fault that's the hotel's problem" #maisondesfous” Respondent 2/28/2014 2:12 PM

“With my job experience, a lot of travel agencies get these things wrong...” Respondent 2/28/2014 3:49 PM

“3rd party booking a room for 4 people - fine print is often ‘you will get 2 double beds OR a king sized bed’. That is not acceptable for 4 people. Official website could confirm a room type.” Respondent 2/28/2014 3:57 PM

“Best to get the information straight from the source.” Respondent 3/1/2014 10:06 PM

“Because I hope that the Hotel has better information on the rooms, and in case of overbooking, would honour customers booked with them first.” Respondent 3/3/2014 3:13 PM

“If anything goes wrong, the Hotel should respond immediately and take full responsibility. Third party you may have to wrangle the hotel for help but you may sign your rights away by using the third party place.” Respondent 3/3/2014 3:46 PM

“Sometimes, it is difficult to assess the legitimacy of 3rd party websites.” Respondent 3/3/2014 4:57 PM
“I’ve read on TripAdvisor that Expedia reservations were often overlooked in overbooking cases.” Respondent 3/4/2014 12:51 PM

“Sometimes you can get extras when speaking directly to hotel staff because they have intimate knowledge about the property such as which room has the best view, size of room, and other amenities. Sometimes, I have even asked for free breakfast and they have included it.” Respondent 3/6/2014 11:03 AM

“There is a chance that the intermediary would not be legitimate and so my ‘booking’ might not be honoured. Also, the intermediary will charge a fee (to me or the hotel or both), so it makes sense to book direct to make sure that I’m paying the lowest price and the hotel is getting maximum benefit.” Respondent 3/10/2014 6:18 AM

4.2.1.2 French Tourism Data

After this section, the researcher geared the questionnaire to a more specific topic: France. 56 respondents had visited France and stayed in hotels all over France. Some locations respondents are as follows:

Figure 33: “Methods of Booking Online”

Figure 33 shows that 52% of the Anglophone respondents booked their accommodations in France via 3rd party intermediaries or online travel agents. 7% booked over the phone with a travel agent, whereas 5% booked over the phone with the hotel. 19% booked directly through the hotel website. The remaining percentile had the tripped booked for them by friends or were on a tour. 56 Respondents answered this question.
Figure 34 shows that prior to visiting France, 55% of respondents visited the hotel website. 39% said they did not, and 5% said the hotel did not have a website. 56 respondents answered this question.

65% of respondents said the hotel website was written in English, 28% said the website was not available in English. The remaining percentile said there was no website available. Respondents who did not have access to an English website sought out information on their hotel via the following outlets: 53.5% visited online review sites such as TripAdvisor.com, 49% visited an 3rd party intermediary booking website, 17.8% relied on word-of-mouth, 7% looked to social media, 3.5% looked at blogs, 3.5% read magazines and other print media, the remaining said they just ‘went with the flow’. 41 respondents answered this question.

To be noted is that when asked if promotions and deals had been available to them in English on the official website and would they have purchased directly from the hotel website, 61% said ‘yes’. 24% indicated they spoke French so it did not matter to them, and the remaining said they
would not have considered booking directly with the hotel. 33 respondents answered this question.

Figure 35: “French Hotel Staff English Proficiency”

Figure 35 shows that respondent indicated that 69.09% of staff spoke English, 16% did not speak any English and in the comments of the remaining percentile, most respondents indicated that their staff spoke ‘a little English’ or ‘yes they spoke English, but very poorly’. 55 respondents answered this question.

Overall, Anglophone respondents had a positive experience in their French hotels. In fact, many described their stays as ‘great’, ‘magical’, and ‘amazing’. The worst words used to describe a respondent’s stay was ‘average’, or ‘as expected’, and no respondents said they had a horrible time in their hotels in France. 42 respondents answered this question.
4.2.1.3 Main Findings

The researcher asked many questions in her quantitative survey and aimed to achieve a good snowball sample data collection throughout Anglophone countries. The main findings for the quantitative snowball survey data are as follows:

Demographic
The majority, 60% of respondents were aged 21 to 29 years old. These respondents originated from the following countries: Canada, United States of America, Australia, United Kingdom, Ireland. Of these respondents, 91.4% do business online primarily in English, though not all consider English to be their mother tongue (68% English).

Traveler Data
Of those who responded to this survey, 54% travel internationally once per year, 33% travel internationally 2 to 4 times per year, 3.5% travel internationally 5 to 10 times per year, and about 4% more than 10 times per year. Both researching accommodations and booking accommodations online are important to them as 97% of respondents researched their hotels prior to booking and 92% book their hotels online. Online review sites are also an important factor to their decision-making and 87% of respondents visit TripAdvisor.com to get information on the hotels they are interested in booking or have booked. Also, 70% of respondents make decisions on where to stay based on TripAdvisor reviews.

Of these Anglophone respondents, 65% said they would look elsewhere online for information on their hotel if the hotel’s website was not available in English. However, the remaining 35% would not even bother to search online for more information and would book with another hotel that did offer online content in English. Many respondents commented that this is because they feel the hotel does not care about their English-speaking tourists if they do not offer English content and open up the line for communication.

Travelers to France
Of the Anglophone respondents, 54% of them have traveled to France and 60% of them have stayed in hotels in France. Respondents stayed in the following areas of France: Paris, Lyon, Disney Paris, Nice, San Tropez, Arras, Uzes, Dijon, Reims, Auvergne, Loire Valley, Nantes, Strasbourg, Toulouse, Marseille, Lille, Normandy. Respondents booked through 3rd party
intermediaries (52%) for their hotel in France. However, 65% said their hotel website was available in English. The remaining percentile who did not have access to an English website because the site was either only available in French, or the hotel did not have a website at all, sought out hotel information at online travel review sites (53.5%), 3rd party intermediary booking sites (49%), and the rest looked to social media and blogs.

4.2.2 Semi-Structured and Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews for this study were done in a more in depth approach by interviewing frequent visitors of France and hotel management themselves. Though the purpose of this study is primarily consumer based, gaining some information from hotels added an interesting perspective from which the research was able to draw some conclusions.

4.2.2.1 Consumerist Interviews

Firstly, however, the interviews with Anglophone frequent travelers to France were used to get a little more in depth view of the Anglophone perspective of France. The data collected refers to the traveler’s demographic, frequency or reason for traveling to France, experience booking hotels, experience staying in hotels, and gives their opinion of what their culture associates France with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Consumer 1</th>
<th>Consumer 2</th>
<th>Consumer 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-year-old Canadian female law school student</td>
<td>34-year-old marketing Canadian/Irish marketing manager for a well-known French beer brand</td>
<td>58-year-old retired female American from New Jersey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency and Reason for Travel</th>
<th>Consumer 1</th>
<th>Consumer 2</th>
<th>Consumer 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travels to France often to visit friends and family</td>
<td>Travels to France an average of 2 times a year and usually stays in Strasbourg or</td>
<td>Traveled to France six times from</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the region of Alsace, and sometimes travels to other part of France for business or leisure

| Hotel Booking Experience | Gets better deals if she books directly with smaller establishments | Will use a 3rd party intermediary website for next trip
| | | They are easy to use, have comparable prices, and even show you the hotel location on a map.
| | | Admits that he finds when booking with intermediaries they make some sort of mistake to his itinerary, lose it, lose the credit card, and most certainly give him a hassle if he tried to complain about any of it.
| | | When she used to book with Travel Agents, she found them very knowledgeable and always referred her to hotels that they themselves have stayed in before.
| | | But that she found she paid more by using a real travel agent than from booking online.
| | | She booked 8 of 10 the hotels online, five times through a direct hotel website, and 3 times through Expedia and Booking.com
| | | A hotel in Nice and a hotel in Lyon were not available in English and so she

1998 to 2013 for leisure, and stayed in hotels on each of her visits
called them directly to book.

All three times they managed to get minor details wrong when booking with Booking.com or Expedia (i.e. rooms, seats on planes, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience Staying in Hotels</th>
<th>Much better to be in a small, cozy place than have to stay in large apartment buildings or hotels</th>
<th>Noticed that his hotel in Strasbourg does not have an English website and he could see that being problematic in bringing in English speaking clients.</th>
<th>Staff working spoke English very well.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural View</td>
<td>One’s perspective of France always depends on what social class one falls into. Those who grow up more privileged assume a higher regard for France as a tourist spot and ignore snobby remarks made by, what she called, the general population.</td>
<td>In Canada people have this notion that France is very far, and vice versa that his French friends and coworkers talk to him about Canada as if it were extremely far. Irish and English people regard France as just another vacation spot. They recognize the deals that can be found online or with Ryan Air, and they take advantage and visit.</td>
<td>When she first began traveling to Europe she felt there were more tourists of an older demographic. Believes younger people could begin to afford visiting France as budget airlines are on the rise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Additional Comments/Quotes | Believes Paris to be a fantastic place  
“You don’t have to be super rich to enjoy France,” said Consumer 1, “but society has pegged it a rich tourist attraction, and the upper class has obliged and claimed France as its own.”  
“...it costs less to visit France than to go to New York for a girls’ shopping weekend.”  
Believes that hotels in France can thrive if they are able to convince North Americans that France is more affordable than they believe it to be  
He wished he knew some good, affordable hotels to stay at in Paris because he assumed there must be tons more than those advertised on Expedia (the site he uses for booking his accommodation)  
“Well first of all, Parisians could be kinder and more polite to tourists since they’re giving a bad reputation to the rest of France,” [when asked what French could do to improve reputation]  
France could benefit from gearing their websites and social media posts towards English speakers.  
In his company they work with a lot of people from Germany and that many of them do not speak French and they communicate in English. | Prefers to book with hotels directly also because she feels they are more trustworthy. |

Figure 36: “Results of Semi-Structured Interviews”
4.2.2.2 Hotel Management Interviews

As mentioned prior, the researcher’s aim is to get more of a consumerist data collection and apply it to the data collected in the secondary statistics and theories. However, the researcher thought it would be interesting to have some primary data collected from the French hotel industry itself. For this, the researcher contacted hotels in France and spoke with managers of the hotels. The information was collected over the phone and presented here in a chart format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hotel Manager 1</th>
<th>Hotel Manager 2</th>
<th>Hotel Manager 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Paris Porte Maillot</td>
<td>Lyon</td>
<td>Strasbourg La Petite France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Employees</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11 – 50, depending on the time of year</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly Number of Guests (Avg.)</td>
<td>22 000</td>
<td>45 000</td>
<td>36 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Hotel Rooms</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where Majority of Bookings Come From</td>
<td>3rd party intermediaries (booking.com, trivago, expedia)</td>
<td>3rd party intermediaries (lastminute, expedia, etc.)</td>
<td>3rd party intermediaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Guests from English Speaking Country</td>
<td>51% - 60%</td>
<td>25% - 40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Guests who do not come from an English Speaking Country but who use English for communicating</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>50% (mostly German and Swiss)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does staff speak at least basic English?</td>
<td>Yes, all of them</td>
<td>Only some of them</td>
<td>Only some of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is the official website in English?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason for not offering website in English?</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>They get most of their booking from 3rd party intermediaries who advertise for them in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Would consider offering in the future</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Yes, but takes time to organize all the information/ find someone to translate it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language in which the hotel responds when contacted in English.</strong></td>
<td>They respond to them in English</td>
<td>They respond to them in English</td>
<td>They respond to them in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types of English promotional advertising they have already done</strong></td>
<td>Social Media &amp; Direct Mail</td>
<td>Direct Mail</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types of French promotional advertising they have already done</strong></td>
<td>Social Media &amp; Direct Mail</td>
<td>Social Media, Direct Mail, Travel Websites, Print (Magazines, travel journals, etc.)</td>
<td>Social media, Blogs, Travel Websites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 37:** “Results of Structured Interviews”
4.2.2.3 Main findings

The use of the semi-structured interviews determined the following:

- There is a disconnect between North American perception of the price of visiting France, and the reality is that it is actually feasible when compared to other similar types of travel experiences.
- The attitude English speakers have towards France greatly depends on their interaction with French people, and where the visit, and the time of year they visit.
- Common misconceptions about France include the inflated price, but also that it is very far and luxurious.
- The use of 3rd party intermediary booking websites is widely used by English speakers for convenience, lack of English website content, time management, and familiarity, and price comparison.
- English speakers do not necessarily want to use 3rd party intermediaries and would prefer the alternative—booking directly with the hotel. Booking with the hotel directly provides a greater sense of trust, but sometimes finding those hotels is difficult.
- The researcher chose to interview these respondents because they offered a wide perspective based on their demographic and geographic profiles.

The use of the structured or standardized interviews with the hotels concluded the following results:

- The use of English in advertising is clearly done at the discretion of the hotel management, and the same goes for the use of English website content.
- All three hotels from different regions attract a large number of English speaking tourists.
- All three even have a fair percentage of tourists that communicate with them in English though English is not their first language.
- All the hotels have at least some staff that speak English.
- They all respond to queries in English, regardless of whether they have English web content or advertise in English.
• They all do some sort of basic online advertising in French

• The researcher chose these hotels to give a bit of a hotel perspective to add depth to the study.
Chapter 5 – Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to finalize, summarize, and draw useful conclusions that comment on and answer the questions set forth in the objectives. (Saunders et. al, 2009)

Saunders et al (2009) also states that the most important part of a business student’s research is to add something of understanding, worth and value to the sources and information gathered in the literature review.

Essentially, the aim of this section is to finally answer my research question of “How can the English language be better utilized in the online promotion of French hotels?”

The restate the objectives were as follows:

To determine the important of tourism in France
   To determine the impact of tourism on France’s economy

To determine the importance of online travel industry
   To determine how travelers get travel information
   To determine the reasons travelers book online

To determine the manner in which people book online
   To determine the impact of 3rd party intermediaries
   To uncover traveler expectations of hotels
   To determine what drives online hotel booking

To determine the use of English in e-commerce and tourism
   To determine how many travelers expect to speak English when abroad
   To determine if French hotels are satisfying communication needs of guests
The purpose of this thesis is to determine and conclude the improvements the French hotel industry should make to be able to capitalize on gaining more direct bookings with Anglophone and English-speaking tourists. This dissertation aims to touch upon each objective and explain how French hotels could implement more online marketing strategies to become more successful and keep up with the changing environment of the online tourism industry.

Objective 1 – Determining the importance of tourism in France

In the literature review, according to a BBC article discussing the ‘world’s favourite holiday destination, France ranked first, ringing in 83 million visitors yearly. This put France in the lead by quite a large margin of 16 million visitors over runner-up country, the USA. (Carter, 2014) Hence, the French tourism industry is the largest in the world, making it the most important.

France holds the second largest economy in Europe, second only to its economic partner Germany. (Kabundi and De Simone, 2007) This should serve as an advantage to French hotels as many people will be traveling for leisure and for business since France has a strong economy.

In 2012, France’s Travel & Tourism’s total contribution to France’s GDP was €197.6 billion, equaling 9.7% of the total GDP. Jobs provided by the industry equaled to 10.9% of France’s total employment. (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2013) This is extremely important for those who work in the French tourism industry as it shows that the contribution that tourism puts towards the French GDP is enormous. Moreover, the amount of jobs provided by the French tourism industry proves that it is strong, important, and should be able to continue to grow.

Objective 2 – Determining the importance of the online travel industry

In 2012, online travel sales hit $162.4 billion, and in 2013 148.3 million travel bookings were made online and the numbers continue to rise (Statisticbrain.com, 2014) This shows that online sales are up and travel agencies are becoming less frequently used as a preferred booking method for travel itineraries.

The e-tourism industry has grown over 73% in the last five years. (Statisticbrain.com, 2014)
• 69% of travelers get their travel information from travel review websites,
• 57% listen to the suggestions of online travel agencies,
• 56% look to travel provider sites, and
• 43% get their information from word-of-mouth of friends and family

(Socialmediatoday.com, 2014)

77% of Tripadvisor.com respondents deemed reviews an important factor for deciding where to stay. 50% of those surveyed were aged 26 – 49 years, with almost 43% aged 50 – 64 years of age, and US citizens. (Starkov and Price, 2003) In the primary research survey conducted by the researcher, it was revealed that there is a younger demographic of 59% aged 21-29, with peaks at 10.9% aged 18 – 20, and 14.5% aged 30 – 39. This shows that young people are beginning to travel more frequently as economy airlines become more and more available, and traveling becomes more affordable. This also shows that as traveling becomes more available to those with lower/starting incomes, it will set the trend for the next generations, meaning that traveling frequently will become the norm.

TripAdvisor.com contains more than 150 million reviews (TripAdvisor.com, 2014) meaning the amount of conversation, communication, and online interaction of this website is constant and vast. Meanwhile, 70% of travelers update their Facebook profiles while on vacation (Socialmediatoday.com, 2014), which shows that online interaction regarding traveling is booming. People want to show their contacts and friends what they are doing, want to share their travel experiences, and want to get involved with online travel communities.

The primary research revealed that 97% of respondents have used the Internet to research their destination prior to booking, 93% used the Internet to specifically get information on hotels. 84% of respondents use TripAdvisor.com to get information on hotels. 69.5% of respondents make decisions based on online reviews.

Both the research study and the literature review determined that travelers purchase accommodations online because it is easier.

• 85.8% buy online for convenience
• 83.6% buy online because it’s easier to compare prices
• 68.5% buy online for the lower prices

(Starkov and Price, 2003)

In the researcher’s own primary data collection, it was found that 97% of respondents researched their hotels prior to booking and 92% book their hotels online. Of these, 54% travel internationally once per year, 33% travel internationally 2 to 4 times per year, 3.5% travel internationally 5 to 10 times per year. It can be concluded then that frequent travelers often utilize online booking methods as convenience is key. Moreover, English is very important to those surveyed as 65% said they would look elsewhere online for information on their hotel if the hotel’s website was not available in English, and the remaining 35% would not even bother to search online for more information and would book with another hotel that did offer online content in English. Therefore, the ability of the hotel to communicate with the customer on a personal level is really what will grab their attention.

Objective 3 - determining the manner in which people book online

Park and Chung concluded that non-website transferred visitors (or those who directly inputted the URL to their final destination, were more likely to purchase, spent more time on the site, and viewed less pages. (Park and Chung, 2009, pp. 1451--1463)

Hsieh and Chen’s study determines the following scale of importance for travelers deciding to purchase online:

| 1) Flexible business processing (i.e. number of payment methods accepted) |
| 2) Actively thinking for customers |
| 3) Fast service speed |
| 4) Attitude of website service personnel |
| 5) Number of mistakes made |
| 6) Convenience of services provided by linked websites |
| 7) Website design |
| 8) Reasonable prices |
| 9) Convenient service locations |

(Hsieh and Chen, 2009)
Starkov and Price realize that there are many people willing to buy offline because of several factors such as security, better pricing, more trust, etc. but may not do so in the end because of these three major convenience factors that the online booking solution provides. However, still respondents had issues concerning the security, personal information, reservation process, and Internet prices being the lowers when they showed wariness to booking online. Starkov and Price states that 69% of US travelers travelling for pleasure prefer to book with the hotel, whereas only 27% prefer to book with intermediaries. (Starkov and Price, 2003) However, this cannot be deemed completely accurate information for our current situation as this paper was written in 2003. 10 years of development and experience in the rapidly growing online industry has shown that people no longer care as much about security. In fact, online booking sites heeded warnings such as those set forth by Starkov and Price, and many now promote ‘secure payment services’ through credit cards or PayPal, etc. Still, hotels would do well to take note of this to pinpoint where online booking sites might still be weak and then they can shape their marketing strategy in accordance with the elements consumers want that online booking sites are still unable to satisfy.

According ACCOR, 43% of European business travelers book hotels directly online through the hotel website, and 33% via an online travel agency. 60% of those surveyed indicated that they would really like to see hotels providing media/ news papers/ magazines/ TV channels from their country. (ACCOR, 2012) This is a good example of something hotels could capitalize. Trust and customer service through booking directly with a hotel is important to customers. In fact, 79% of the researcher’s survey respondents claim that they trust hotels with their booking details, as opposed to 3rd party intermediaries.

Of 615 French hotel restaurants, 60% of them have a contract with a 3rd party intermediary booking website according to a 2013 study. 55% of these pay 15%-20% of the booking in commissions.

• 83% to increase amount of bookings
• 68% to increase brand visibility
• 65% to find new clients
• 11% to get last minute bookings
• 10% for promotional campaigning
  (Ohayon, Mesplède and Bouquier, 2013)

Ohayon concludes that the reality is that these 3rd party intermediaries are incredibly internet-savvy. They are present on all the top social media platforms, they run their own blogs, they post relevant travel information and material, and engage the customer on a level that is not sales based and that hotels need to invest in their own online marketing. (Ohayon, Mesplède and Bouquier, 2013) Therefore, if 3rd party intermediaries are investing in the development of their online business, hotels need to become more engaged in the online industry. This, however, does not mean that they need to gain professional proficiency in another domain; they simply need to contact a digital web-marketing agency or obtain a marketing consultant content. Both may be necessary depending on the needs of the hotel to become more independent of 3rd party intermediaries.

However, Heyer explains that hotels should not rely on intermediaries for their bookings, nor should they completely try to cut them out. (Heyer, 2012) Heyer says hotels using intermediary sites should provide visually compelling material to the reader, pictures, detailed descriptions of the property written in the language of the buyer or at least the language of e-commerce, that being primarily English. Also, they should be active in their response to reviews. (Heyer, 2012)

Hotel marketers need to look into the development of online services, customizable to each traveler’s needs whether it is by language, bookmarking, contacting, etc. Essentially, hotel marketers need to give travelers the option to book with them from whichever device they prefer as study shows that tablet users spend 20% more than computer users, and 50% more than smartphone users, and 90% of all mobile shopping revenue comes from Apple iPad users. (Heyer, 2012) This boom in mobile application usage is an important factor that needs to be taken into account.

From the researcher’s survey, it was determined that 91.7% of respondents have booked hotels online, and 55% have booked hotels directly through the hotel website. Of those who have not booked directly with a hotel online, 84.5% said they would consider it in the future. Also, 88% said they would be more inclined to book directly through the hotel website if prices
and value were comparable to the offers on 3rd party intermediaries. This shows that value and price are important to travelers. The research determined that Anglophone travelers want both good pricing and value as trust is still of importance, but also too are perks and pricing.

Of those who have visited France, 61% of respondents have stayed in hotels. Meanwhile, 45% booked their stay through 3rd party intermediaries, 20% through official hotel website. Therefore, there is a large percentile of Anglophone speakers going untapped by the French hotel industry and simply passed through them from the 3rd party intermediary websites to whom they are obligated to pay large sums of commission.

**Objective 4 - Determining the use of English in e-commerce and tourism**

As of 2010, there were 536.6 million users on the Internet. ([Internetworldstats.com, 2014](http://www.internetworldstats.com)) Research shows that tourists from 119 countries, 51.5% communicate in English. ([Dann, 2011](http://www.travelandleisure.com)) 90% of questions posted in TripAdvisor.com forums are written in English. ([Tripadvisor.com, 2014](http://www.tripadvisor.com)) This shows that English is an important and powerful component to commerce that should be utilized in marketing strategies more often to capitalize on the ability to reach the most consumers.

Lonely Planet’s French website receives an average of 80 000 visitors per month, while it’s English counterpart receives 3 million visitors per month. ([Pearse et al., 2014](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) The researcher’s survey shows that about 66% of respondents who have stayed in hotels in France said the hotel website was offered in English. If not offered in English, respondents got information on their hotel from online review sites (53.5%) or online booking sites (39.3%). Evidently, online review and booking sites are still an important component to this growing industry.

Also via Pearse et al., 61% of respondents said that they would have preferred the hotel website be available in English, and if it had been they would have considered booking directly with the hotel website. As previously mentioned, by incorporating more English into websites, French hotels have a better chance of getting direct bookings.
Pearse et al. also mentions that 70% of respondents to France said their hotel staff spoke English. If the hotel staff speaks English this means that the hotels value English customers. However, there seems to be somewhat of a disconnect between the availability of English at these establishments when hotels communicate online. Essentially, by providing English online hotels can automatically let consumers know that they will be able to communicate with the staff when they arrive in France. By not providing online English content, it sends the message that the hotels are not equipped with the personnel to cater to English speaking travellers.

Two of the three hotel managers interviewed in the structured interview portion indicated that their hotel websites were available in English. Between all three hotels, they receive between 25%-60% of guests from English speaking countries.

Consumer 2 from the semi-structured interview portion pointed out that some travelers may not come from English speaking countries but they will communicate in English when abroad. This shows that English is quintessential in not only communicating with guests from English speaking countries, but also with guests from abroad who utilize English when travel and in commerce.

The hotel managers interviewed confirmed this information, and between all three hotels, they get between 15%-50% of guests who are not from an English speaking country but who communicate with them in English.
5.2 Recommendations

Through both the primary and secondary research done for this research paper, the researcher has concluded that there are several recommendations to answer the question:

“How can the English language be better utilized in the online promotion of French hotels?”

In fact, the researcher has determined that a combination of cultural biases of the Anglophone tourist market, and French hoteliers’ neglect to cater to a wide variety of people has created a communication gap in the service provided. This has resulted in 3rd party intermediaries not being used in the traditional sense, which is to gain a broader reach of consumers, but in fact French hotels have become dependent on them to reach an entire consumer segment – Anglophones.

The researcher has recommended the following:

• Hotel managers need to recognize their English guests and the growing number of young people beginning to travel more frequently.
• Hotel managers need to allocate marketing funds to the production of English-rich web content to boost conversation, interaction, promotion, and communication
• Hotel managers need to invest in online marketing through social media, the development of their own website, and even blogging in English as this will boost the above mentioned points as well as engage consumers on a more personal level. Hotel managers need to entice consumers and attract them by creating an organic dialogue in review sites, and through social media outlets in English.
• Hotel managers need to recognize that the buying market is changing and that consumers have more buying power, more choices, and more sources of information from which will influence their decision making process.
• Hotel managers need remain competitive without lowering brand standards. This can be achieved through added value packages without having to lower prices as this dissertation has concluded that both value and pricing are important to travelers because many people still put more trust in hotels. Therefore, pricing should be a relevant point of interest, but added values like Internet, parking, meals, room upgrades
and other amenities not offered through 3rd party intermediary packages are a big selling point that hotels might capitalize on.

- Hotel managers need to look at 3rd party intermediaries in a new light, and forget the personalized travel agents of the past with whom they had personal relationships and who also knew their hotel well-enough to sell it properly.
- Hotel managers need to stress the fact that France is an affordable vacation option in their advertising campaigns as current biases deem France luxurious and unaffordable.

As seen in Figure 9 of the literature review by Enrique, 2013, online content is the key factor to this maturation of online communication with Anglophone tourists. Moreover, Figure 9 defines what the researcher deems as a useful tool to show marketers where to implement the recommendations above. Of course, each marketing strategy will be different and not all steps will follow the exact same timeline. However, to restate the main steps to be taken within the online community are as follows; awareness, consideration, purchase, retention, advocacy. Under each of these steps there are several online marketing tools that can be used in which content must be implemented. These vary from Online Ads, Email, Blogging, Media, Website, Forum, FAQs pages, Promotions, Social Networking, and Newsletters. By utilizing these tools and creating coherent and consistent online web content that speaks to the consumer and represents the brand of the hotel, an online marketing strategy can be useful.

The researcher based her recommendations on the primary and secondary data collected throughout this dissertation process. The points made in the recommendations are to provide hotel managers with the tools and steps in management strategy to achieve more direct bookings and minimize the use of 3rd party intermediaries. Still, the researchers believes that 3rd party intermediaries can be useful in reaching a wider spectrum of consumers, but that hotels should implement their own competitive marketing strategies to get direct bookings and not solely rely on intermediaries who demand large commissions. The usefulness of English to market to Anglophone travelers is penultimate in generating online conversation. The fact that many Anglophone consumers in the primary research analysis indicated that most hotel staff in France spoke English shows that the French hotel industry is ready to receive Anglophone tourists. However, the lack of online marketing communication with their English speaking tourism market means this communication gap must be resolved to ensure success. In fact, the
lack of online communication will just heighten the Anglophone bias that visiting France is so luxurious, exotic, and ultimately unattainable as pointed out by the semi-structured interviews of the 3 tourists who often visit France.

By implementing the marketing strategies and becoming more aware of the statistics of the changing tourism industry as indicated in this research paper, hotel managers will be equipped with the information needed to move forward in this competitive and growing industry.
Chapter 6 – Self Reflection on own learning and performance

Chapter 6 aims to conclude what the researcher learned throughout this study. Skills they acquired will be noted in this section, along with how they plan to implement these learning tools in future projects.

6.1 Reflection on learning

“The activity or process of gaining knowledge or skill by studying, practicing, being taught, or experiencing something” (Merriam-webster.com, 2014)

This quote is exactly what the researcher experienced through their process of learning. The understanding gained through this dissertation process has, for the researcher, been transcendent in that they feel they have achieved something they have never attempted to achieve before. This type of learning is transformative.

Mezirow claims that critical thinking must take precedence over the uncritical assimilation of knowledge. He states that transformative learning is but a route to the development of critical thinking. (Mezirow, 1997)

Schunk believes that learning and the ability rate at which people learn is based on self-efficacy. Self-efficacy hypothesizes that human achievement depends on interactions between one’s behaviors, personal factors (i.e. thoughts, beliefs), and environmental conditions. (Schunk, 2001)

The researcher certainly felt they needed a sense of purpose and drive to complete this research paper, and they are glad that they were able to find the motivation to do so.

Also, the researcher explored the work of Dale (2001), in which they theorize the 4 stages of learning.
Throughout the process of this dissertation, it is certain that the researcher has moved through these four stages of learning whereby they began as incompetent in their field of learning, and now feel as if they have gained a academic level of knowledge in their field of study.

6.1.1 Skills Development

This section aims to discuss the skills that the researcher has acquired throughout the research process. They will also indicate the impact that these new-found skills have had on their personal development as an academic.

6.1.2 Research Capability and Analytical Skills

The researcher determined that there is an abundance of information available on the Internet. Here they gained the skills to be able to identify the information that would be useful
to the study, and disregard the information that seemed irrelevant to the nature of this research paper.

Furthermore, the researcher learned the importance of criticizing information before deciding to use it. The researcher believes that this has helped lead to more relevant and useful content than if this skill had not been acquired.

### 6.1.3 Team building skills

Throughout the academic year and throughout the coursework, the researcher learned to work with their colleagues on a level that was much more complex than any teamwork they had partaken in prior. Time management of all team members, not to mention communication and reliability, were all of the utmost importance. Moreover, prior to entering this program the researcher did not speak French and due to the high volume of French students in this academic year, the researcher was able to learn an entirely new language with the help of their teammates.

### 6.1.4 Communication and Language Skills

As mentioned prior, the researcher was able to learn a new language to be able to better communicate with those on their team. The process was extremely difficult at times but this experience has resulted in the ability to add another language fluency to their resume. This in itself is remarkable, and the researcher is grateful to have had this opportunity.

Moreover, as the course was in English, the researcher was able to help classmates with their proof reading and helped with group project editing. Communication was an enormous part of the learning curve for this researcher as language was a very important factor.

### 6.1.5 Marketing Knowledge

The researcher’s marketing knowledge has increased significantly. Prior to their courses at DBS, the researcher had no formal academic marketing background. The researcher most enjoyed the classes Integrated marketing Communications (for the practical aspect of the final
campaigned project), Global Marketing (as the professor was extremely knowledgeable), and Service Marketing (as the projects throughout were very useful for developing new skills).

6.1.6 Time Management

The researcher learned a lot about time management throughout the coursework and throughout the dissertation process. There were always many projects of different kinds in process and at different stages of completion that it was extremely important that the researcher become good at time management. The use and creation of the Gantt Chart helped map out exactly what the researcher had to achieve, and in what time frame.

6.1.7 Future Application of Learning

The program at DBS has been the most rewarding academic experience for the researcher. They plan to utilize the information, knowledge, and skills gained throughout this dissertation process and throughout the course portion in their future career.

Tourism has always been interesting to the researcher, as well as languages. The researcher is proud that they will be able to use this knowledge, along with all the other skills such as teamwork, time management, etc. in future work environments. The researcher is looking forward to exploring many sectors of the marketing world and hopes to continue to gain useful knowledge throughout her career.
References

mobile marketing.


• World Tourism Organization UNWTO. 2014. International tourism exceeds
Appendix

Appendix 1 - Budget

Estimated Costs for Thesis Production:

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<th>Printing</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>Taking Out Interviewees</th>
<th>Purchasing Papers/Articles</th>
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Appendix 2 - Project Management Schedule

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<th>FEB</th>
<th>Mid Feb</th>
<th>MAR</th>
<th>Mid Mar</th>
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Appendix 3 - Quantitative Questionnaire

1. Which category below includes your age?
   - 17 or younger
   - 18-20
   - 21-29
   - 30-39
   - 40-49
   - 50-59
   - 60 or older

2. What is your nationality?

3. What is your first language or mother-tongue?
   - English
   - French
   - Mandarin
   - Spanish
   - Japanese
   - Other (please specify)
   - Portuguese
   - Italian
   - German
   - Arabic
   - Russian
   - Korean
   - Hindustani
   - Bengali
   - Malay-Indonesian

4. What language do you mainly use to do business online?
   (to search products/services, buy products/services, get detailed information on products/services)
   - English
   - French
   - Mandarin
   - Spanish
   - Japanese
   - Other (please specify)
   - Portuguese
   - Italian
   - German
   - Arabic
   - Russian
   - Korean
   - Hindustani
   - Bengali
   - Malay-Indonesian

5. If traveling to a country where the official language is not the same as yours, which language would you first try to communicate in / which language do you think locals would likely have the greatest knowledge of?
   - English
   - French
   - Spanish
   - Italian
   - German
   - Mandarin
   - Other (please specify)
6. On average, how often do you travel?
   - Once a year
   - 2-4 times per year
   - 5-10 times per year
   - more than 10 times per year
   - I never travel

7. On average, how often do you travel internationally?
   - Once a year
   - 2-4 times per year
   - 5-10 times per year
   - more than 10 times per year
   - I never travel

8. Have you booked any travel itineraries online? (airfare, hotel, resort, tours, etc.)
   - yes
   - no

9. Have you specifically booked accommodations online? (hotel, resort, B&B, etc.)
   - yes
   - no

10. Which online booking website(s) have you used to book accommodations? (you may make multiple choices)
    - Booking.com
    - TripAdvisor
    - Hotwire.com
    - Expedia
    - Agoda.com
    - Priceline.com
    - Other (please specify)
11. Have you used the web to research information on your destination prior to booking?
   - yes
   - no

12. Have you used the web to research hotels prior to booking?
   - yes
   - no

13. Which websites do you visit/browse to get information on your hotel? (you may make multiple choices)
   - TripAdvisor
   - Oyster
   - Travel and Leisure.com
   - Hotel Chatter
   - Zoovar
   - Articles from blogs or news pages
   - Other (please specify)

14. Have you made OR would you make travel decisions based on other consumers’ online reviews?
   - yes, I have
   - no, I haven't
   - no, but I would
   - no, but I wouldn't

15. Do you check OR would you check the official hotel website for promotions or more information?
   - yes, I do
   - no, I don't
   - no, but I would
   - no, but I wouldn't

16. Have you ever visited an official hotel website and it was not in English, or the English was poorly written?
   - yes
   - no
   - not applicable

17. If the hotel's website was not available in English, would you look elsewhere online (i.e. review websites) for more information in English?
   - yes
   - no

18. Why? (Optional)
19. In the past, have you ever booked directly through an official hotel website?

- no, I booked elsewhere
- not applicable (I've never traveled much)

20. If "yes", which Hotel and Where? (Or skip to next question)

[Blank space]

21. If "no" to question #19, would you consider booking through an official hotel website in future?

- yes
- no

[Comment (Optional) blank space]

22. Would you book directly through the hotel if the official website offered the same pricing or value as the promotions offered through online 3rd party intermediaries (i.e. expedia, orbitz, hotwire, priceline, etc.) or online travel agencies?

- yes
- no
- Other (please specify)

23. Would you be more inclined to trust the official hotel website OR the 3rd party intermediary/online travel agency with your booking details?

- Official Hotel Website
- 3rd Party Intermediary/Online Travel Agency

24. Why? (Optional)

[Blank space]
25. Have you visited France?
(If you hit "no", you're done! Just go to the end and submit. Thank you for your support in this research project.)
- yes
- no

26. Have you stayed in a hotel in France?
(If you hit "no", skip to question #35 on the following page)
- yes
- no

27. If yes, which Hotel and Where?

28. How did you book your stay?
- Online (3rd Party Intermediary - i.e. expedia, tripadvisor, etc.)
- Online (Travel Agent - i.e. Carlson Wagonlit Travel, AAA, CAA, etc.)
- Online (Official Hotel Website)
- Over the phone (Hotel)
- Over the phone (Travel Agent)
- Other (please specify)

29. Prior to your stay in France, did you visit the official hotel website?
- yes
- no
- they did not have an official website

30. If "yes", was the website in English?
- yes
- no
- they didn't have a website
- yes, but poorly written

31. If you answered "no" to question #28, where did you get information on your hotel? (you may make multiple choices)
- Online (review site)
- Online (booking site)
- Online (social media)
- Online (blogs or news sites)
- Other (please specify)

- Print (magazines, newspaper, brochures, etc.)
- Word of mouth (friends referred you)
- You did no research / went with the flow
32. If you answered "no" to question #29, and the website had offered accommodation deals of good pricing/value in English, would you have considered booking directly through them?

- yes
- no
- I speak French so it's all good :)
- I speak French, but I would have preferred it in English since it is my first language

33. How did you find the overall hotel service?

34. Did your hotel staff speak English?

- yes
- no
- Other (please specify)

35. If not, did this bother you?

36. If you have visited France (regardless of if you stayed in a hotel), how did you find the overall service experience? (Optional)
Appendix 4 - Semi-Structured Interview Notes

Consumer 1

The first person interviewed was a 25-year-old Canadian female law school student who travels to France often to visit friends and family. The interview took place Wednesday, April 20, 2014 at a downtown Toronto sushi bar at lunchtime. The respondent will herein after be referred to as Consumer 1.

Consumer 1 entered the sushi bar in a flurry of delicate chiffon scarves, a Longchamp bag wrestling on her wrist. She sat down and immediately began to delve into her European summer vacation plans. She mentioned she would be visiting Austria, Switzerland, and France that summer, to begin with. The researcher began to talk about France and ask where Consumer 1 was headed. Consumer 1 replied that she would be visiting Paris in August and was not looking forward to the fact that the city will be vacant. The researcher asked why it would be vacant, and Consumer 1 proceeded to explain that many shops and businesses in Paris close for almost the entire month of August, and that the place becomes packed with tourists. The researcher commented that Consumer 1 seemed unhappy and why would she go to Paris during this time if she believes it will not be fun. Consumer 1 instantly chimed in, saying that Paris was a fantastic place no matter the time of year and that August was the only time that fit her travel schedule.

The researcher then asked Consumer 1 if she would be staying in a hotel, to which she answered ‘yes’. She said she would be staying in a small hotel located in the third arrondissement of Paris. She also added than when she was younger and would travel with her large family of 6, they would often stay in large chains or rent full apartments from agencies. However, as she has gotten older and gotten to know the city better, she has done her research to find the best little hotels in the city and has been staying at those places since. She claims that she gets better deals if she books directly with smaller establishments, and that for stays longer than just a few days it feels much better to be in a small, cozy place than have to stay in large apartment buildings or hotels.

The researcher then asked what Consumer 1 though the Canadian perspective of France was. Consumer 1 responded that she believed one’s perspective of France always depends on what social class one falls into. For example, she said, those who grow up more privileged
assume a higher regard for France as a tourist spot and ignore snobby remarks made by, what she called, the general population.

“You don’t have to be super rich to enjoy France,” said Consumer 1, “but society has pegged it a rich tourist attraction, and the upper class has obliged and claimed France as its own.”

When asked to elaborate, she explained that it felt that for so long France has been associated with fine dining, expensive wine, and luxury brands that in reality, “...it costs less to visit France than to go to New York for a girls’ shopping weekend.”

The researcher then asked what she thought French tourism needed to do to change this stereotype. Consumer 1 answered that she thought people were beginning to become more open minded and that with the rise in social media usage, people and destinations seem closer, and have the ability to become more personal. She said that she thought that small hotels, like the one she says at in Paris, should utilize this free marketing tool and invest the time to communicate and reach out to the North American market.

“The divide is getting much smaller, airfare is cheaper, affordable hotels are there if you look for them and if they communicate with you, and soon we’ll be able to jump across the pond!” she joked.

What can be noted by this interview is that Consumer 1 was very adamant about changing general perspective. She truly believes that hotels in France can thrive if they are able to convince North Americans that France is more affordable than they believe it to be.

Consumer 2
The researcher also interviewed a male frequent travel to France. This traveler is a 34-year-old marketing Canadian/Irish marketing manager for a well-known French beer brand. He will be referred to as Consumer 2. Consumer 2 travels to France an average of 2 times a year and usually stays in Strasbourg or the region of Alsace, and sometimes travels to other part of France for business or leisure.
The researcher met the informant at a chic downtown Toronto bar in the financial and marketing district on Friday, April 11, 2014 at 20:00. The bar had low lighting and lofty feel to it. Consumer 2 was running late from a meeting but still showed up cheerfully.

The researcher began the interview almost immediately as they did not want to keep Consumer 2 long. The researcher asked if Consumer 2 had plans to visit France in the coming year, and Consumer 2 answered that he was actually planning a trip for May. He added that May was a very busy time for his line of work as beer is the drink of summer and so he had many conferences and meetings to attend to in France at corporate office to then bring back those marketing elements to implement them into the Canadian strategy.

The researcher asked if he would be staying in a hotel. Consumer 2 answered that he would be staying in 2 hotels for this trip. He said he would be visiting friends when landing in Paris and that he would get a hotel in Paris for a few nights as his friends had no room in their apartment, as well as a newborn baby. The researcher asked how he would be booking his hotel in Paris. Consumer 2 responded that he would use a 3rd party intermediary website. He added that he found them useful because they were easy to use, had comparable prices, and even showed you the hotel location on a map. He admitted that he always found that when booking with intermediaries they would make some sort of mistake to his itinerary, lose it, lose the credit card, and most certainly give him a hassle if he tried to complain about any of it. He mentioned he wished he knew some good, affordable hotels to stay at in Paris because he assumed there must be tons more than those advertised on Expedia (the site he uses for booking his accommodation).

For his second hotel stay, his company was booking it but he said it was always the same one in Strasbourg. He said it was well located and well-known for Strasbourg but not a chain. He said the service was always excellent.

The researcher asked what he thought Canadian or Irish people thought about France. He said that he has traveled a lot between North America and Europe and he always found that the perception of France depended on where one was. He said in Canada people have this notion that France is very far, and vice versa that his French friends and coworkers talk to him about
Canada as if it were extremely far. He admits that it is technically the other side of the world, yet it only takes 7 hours by plane from Toronto to Paris. On the other hand, he said that Irish and English people regard France as just another vacation spot. They recognize the deals that can be found online or with Ryan Air, and they take advantage and visit.

The researcher asked what Consumer 2 thought France could do to improve their tourism from North America.

“Well first of all, Parisians could be kinder and more polite to tourists since they’re giving a bad reputation to the rest of France,” he answered.

He also answered that hotels in France could benefit from gearing their websites and social media posts towards English speakers. He said he himself noticed that his hotel in Strasbourg does not have an English website and he could see that being problematic in bringing in English speaking clients. Moreover, he added that in his company they work with a lot of people from Germany and that many of them do not speak French so they all communicate in English.

This informant visits France often and by the information he shared with the researcher in this interview, it can be noted that French hotels neglecting to advertise or offer web content in English are not only missing out on Anglophone tourists, but English speakers in general as many more people communicate in English.

**Consumer 3**

The researcher interviewed a final consumer who has traveled to France several times on vacation. The consumer will be herein after referred to as Consumer 3. Consumer 3 is a 58-year-old retired female American from New Jersey. The interview was done via telephone on Saturday, April 12, 2014 at approximately 11:00.

Consumer 3 indicated that she had traveled to France six times from 1998 to 2013, and stayed in hotels on each of her visits. She has visited Paris all six times, Nice twice, and Lyon twice. She indicated that she traveled to Paris once at Christmas time, and the rest of her trips took place between the months of May and August.

The researcher asked Consumer 3 how they booked the hotels they stayed at. Consumer 3
responded that the first two times were quite early in the online booking process, and so she booked her trips through a travel agent. She indicated that the travel agent was very knowledgeable and always referred her to hotels that they themselves have stayed in before. Consumer 2 said she was very happy with the selections made by the travel agent but that she found she paid more by using a real travel agent than from booking online.

The researcher asked how many of ten hotels they stayed at were booked online. Consumer 3 said she booked eight of the hotels online, five times through a direct hotel website, and 3 times through Expedia and Booking.com. Consumer 3 said her experience booking with Expedia and Booking.com were just ‘okay’. She said that all three times they managed to get minor details wrong. She mentioned that twice she booked airfare through them as well as the hotels, and both times they got someone in her group’s seat wrong, or room wrong. She prefers to book with hotels directly also because she feels they are more trustworthy.

The researcher asked her if she booked the hotels through their websites. She said for one in Lyon yes, and for all of the ones she booked the hotels directly in Paris, yes. But she mentioned that in Nice and once in Lyon the hotel was not available in English and so she called them directly. Luckily, she said they had staff working that spoke English very well. She also said almost all the staff at all the hotels she has stayed at spoke English well enough to help guests.

The researchers asked how Consumer 3 thinks Americans view visiting France. Consumer 3 responded that it depended on the people. She said that when she first began traveling to Europe she felt there were more tourists of an older demographic, but that now she believes that younger people could begin to afford visiting France as budget airlines are on the rise.

What the researcher noted from this interview is that Consumer 3’s buy experience changed throughout their years of travel to France. Also, Consumer 3 prefers to book directly with hotels to avoid intermediary hassles.
Appendix 5 – Watson Box

WATSON Box

What?
“How can the English language be better utilized in the online promotion of French hotels?”

Objectives:
To determine the important of tourism in France
To determine the impact of tourism on France’s economy
To determine the importance of online travel industry
To determine how travelers get travel information
To determine the reasons travelers book online
To determine the manner in which people book online
To determine the impact of 3rd party intermediaries
To uncover traveler expectations of hotels
To determine what drives online hotel booking
To determine the use of English in e-commerce and tourism
To determine how many travelers expect to speak English when abroad
To determine if French hotels are satisfying communication needs of guests

Why?
Info Gap: There is a lot to be said about the tourism industry but not much on the importance of English as a tool of e-commerce and in tourism.

I have a great interest in the field of web content writing, SEO, languages, and tourism

“As users engage across multiple platforms and devices, cross-channel consistency and optimization is key... Users expect relevant, targeted content... 75% of marketers state that compelling content is a factor in closing sales...” (Heyer, 2012)