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**“THE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL OF A HOTEL –  
THE CASE OF THE W BARCELONA.”**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine the sustainable model of a hotel, in this case, of the hotel W Barcelona. By analyzing their decision-making process and the implementations made in their operational value chain, improvements were found, and recommendations given.

In order to achieve those objectives, review of academics and scientific researches were achieved to provide support and evidences of the right path to follow for corporates to reach their sustainable goals.

Personal researches were assessing thanks to the collection of primary data through in-depth exploratory and semi-structured explanatory interviews, with a studied group selected intentionally, composed by Executives Chefs of W Barcelona or specific responsible in Marriott International. In addition, a quantitative data research was led in form of a test hypotheses survey with a studied group of 100 people strong and selected randomly through the employees of W Barcelona. Those data were quantified and analyzed, as statistical relationships identification, in order to emphasize the results and conclusions.

The results have been providing the evidence of a lack of communication and a not-enough consciousness of the positive effect sustainability may have on the identity of an enterprise. However, the findings identify a willingness to do well and constant improvements in the value chain. Additional recommendations were given as part of the conclusions.

The first part of the results can be generalizable findings about the sustainable model for the hotels and can be applied in other properties. However, if results can be shared, the study was focused on the W Barcelona and variations may occur depending on the brand, the size and the location of the property.

## INTRODUCTION

The planet is dying, and by the human fault. Doing individual small actions can help but won't change the global movement regarding ecology and sustainability. It's been some decades now that people are really starting to care (Meadow *et al.*, 1972; Brown, 1982). However, since the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018, the planet has reached the point of no return. Globally, the population had consumed more resources than the Earth can generate in a year (Edition.cnn, 2019). Now people are scared. Changes need to be made in big scale, and for that, only corporations and big companies can show the example and encourage others to do the same. As said Michael Porter, only businesses can create wealth (Porter and Kramer, 2007).

It is vital for every companies to tend to a sustainable business nowadays, but especially in the hospitality industry. First, because businesses represent the global economy and are the biggest strengths capable to change things (Porter and Kramer, 2007), and the Hospitality Industry is now one of the biggest businesses in the world. Moreover, Tourism accounts for 16% of Spain's Gross Domestic Product (Caixabank, 2017).

Barcelona is the economic, cultural and administrative capital of Catalonia, receiving until 8,9 million of international tourists in 2017, making it the 25<sup>th</sup> most visited city worldwide in 2015 and the 6<sup>th</sup> amongst European city destinations in 2017 (Statista, 2019). The tourism industry in Barcelona is important, as it has a major impact on the economic development and the rate of employment in the region (Holjevac, 2003). However, it is without forgetting the impact such an activity can have on the city and the environment.

And secondly because, the hospitality industry is "service". If hotels can provide service for their internal guest but are unable to care for their neighbors, or even for the planet, they are not driving the word "hospitality" to its first sense. If they are 'hospitality', they have to care (Meyer, 2009). It can also boost the positive communication and the branding image of the company towards someone who cares for others, which will resulted in even more recognition and profit (Nielsen, 2014).

It also has been proven that the whole operational chain can be improved with the implementation of corporate social responsibility practices (Vastag, Rondinelli and Kerekes, 1996; Giménez Leal, Casadesus Fa and Pasola, 2003; Porter and Kramer, 2006), with CSR policies to help businesses

recognized what can be their profit and help them put actions in order to find benefits for both the company and the society (Windsor, 2006; Garcia and Armas, 2007; Segarra-Oña *et al.*, 2012).

This study is going to analyze the sustainable model of a hotel, and more specifically the case of the hotel W Barcelona. After an analysis to first understand their positioning on the subject and their operational value chain, there will be a study about their implementations, like the obtention of the Biosphere Recognition as a corporate sustainable tool. The objective is to demonstrate that businesses, even big ones, can be better citizens, while increasing their own profits. Yet, to incorporate sustainability is an investment but with a significant importance and a purposeful meaning that can't be avoided any longer.

## 1. ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

### 1.1. COMPANY INFORMATION'S

#### 1.1.1. MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

In 1927, J. Willard Marriott opened the A&W root beer stand with his wife, with only nine-bar stools. This stand quickly evolves to become the Hot Shoppes Restaurant as they added food to their menu. In 1928, the family bought and opened two more restaurants bearing the same names; the Hot Shoppes chain was born.



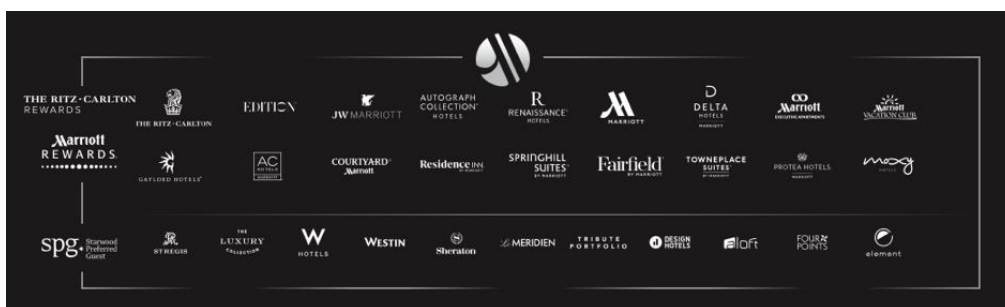
(Marriott, 2019)

Ten years later, in 1937, they were the first restaurant company to deliver food boxes in in-flight airline catering. Following the success, Hot Shoppes, Inc became public in 1953 (Marriott, 2019).

However, it's in 1957, when Bill Marriott, Willard Marriott's hair, get at the management of their first hotel, that the company really expanded and became Marriott International. Then, it went pretty fast with the acquisition of renowned hotel group to their portfolio. Marriott's family's philosophy of hospitality was a precursor and become the leaders of the industry for many years.

Marriott International is now the world's largest hotel company. They are specifically taking advantage on the brand name thanks to the Marriott family history, to fulfill their vision statement; "To be the World's Favorite travel Company" (Marriott International, 2019). Their core values, which are; 'Put people first', 'Pursue excellence', 'Embrace change', 'Act with integrity' and 'Serve our world', are the reason of their renowned.

Their business model is based on their vast portfolio composed of 30 brands. With different types of brands such as Luxury, Premium, Select, Longer Stays and Collection, they are able to cover all markets. Nowadays, they count no less than 6,500 properties scattered through 127 countries (Marriott, 2019)



(W Barcelona, 2018)

### 1.1.2. W HOTELS

W Hotels is a luxury hotel brand created by the Starwood group in the late 1990s with their first W hotel in New York City. Since 2016, the Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide merged with Marriott International, allowing the W hotels a wider recognition and advantages.



W Hotels it's 53 open properties and 31 pipeline properties, counting 14 393 open rooms and 7 550 pipeline rooms in more than 25 countries (Marriott Hotels Development, 2019).

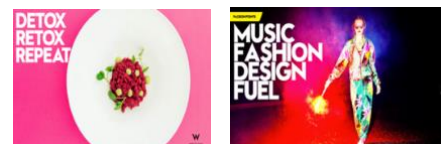


*(photo: own source)*

W Barcelona was the first W hotel implemented in Western Europe, and opened in October 2009; 473 rooms, 67 suites and 7000m<sup>2</sup> of functional spaces. It became especially notorious thanks to its futuristic architecture in the shape of a huge sail standing by the sea, designed by Ricardo Bofill (RicardoBofill, 2019) and its appearance in the movie Largo Winch, known as the W Tower.

W Barcelona has been awarded for the 4<sup>th</sup> time as Spain's leading hotel at the world travel awards.

Since the beginning, they demark themselves as an "avant-garde" hotels chain with a very distinct leading position. Their goal? Being in the center of the international stage, combining their four passion points; Music, Fashion, Design and Fuel to create the W experience. W Hotels is proud to claim that they have "disrupted" the classic luxury hospitality scene. Their whole management philosophy is based on their mission, vision and values. Their mission is to "fuel" the guest with music and fashion in a vanguard design and to do what they called the Detox-Retox-Repeat. Their vision is intended to be innovative and inspiring, "often copied but never matched" (Marriott News Center, 2019). Concerning their values, W Internationals is dedicated to promoting equality and giving a voice through collaborations and events, offering a living as their image, "Loud and Proud" (W Hotels & Resorts, 2019).





## 1.2. MACRO / MICRO ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS

This study first starts with a SWOT analysis, developed by Albert Humphrey from the Stanford University. By analyzing the micro and macro environment of W hotel, it'll be possible to assess its strengths and weaknesses, as well as its opportunities and threats, and so all, its current position in the market. To analyze the external environment, a PEST analysis was also used, which concerns the Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors that can impact the business' operations. In order to respect the length of this company analysis, this analysis will focus on only five major points regarding their internal environment (strengths and weaknesses) and five again related to the external one (opportunities and threats), although there is much more criteria to be taken into account for a complete analysis.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Its exclusive location and the fact that it's one of the most notorious building in Barcelona.</li> <li>- The uniqueness of their service and philosophy within the market of Barcelona</li> <li>- Being part of Marriott International.</li> <li>- The employees have options to raise within the hotel thanks to Marriott careers and internal promotions.</li> <li>- Marriott International also provide a new support, such as Serve 360, their new sustainability program.</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It's 600 employees altogether and around 200 more "short-terms" during the high season. This equals to a lot of rotation.</li> <li>- Some of the material/equipment have been here for a long time and is sometimes damages or just old.</li> <li>- No communication at all about their sustainability.</li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prohibition of opening new hotel in the center of Barcelona – PEUAT.</li> <li>- Increase of tourism in Spain, and in Barcelona in general (KPIs).</li> <li>- Increase of innovations regarding the technological trends.</li> <li>- The Millennials' behavior; they tend to work for companies that are committed to the society but also to their employees.</li> </ul>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The high competition and especially with the increase of Airbnb's and the sublets.</li> <li>- The politique situation of Catalonia and its consequences.</li> <li>- The economic crises that touches Catalonia and Spain in general.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Researcher's creation)</i></p>      |

### 1.2.1. MICROENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS

As seen during the introduction, W hotel is famous for its location and architecture that had made it one of the most renowned building in Barcelona. Also called the hotel “Vella” for its sail shape, everybody does know the W, even if they never entered it. It is also a local meeting point for the nightlife of Barcelona as they are hosting tons of events, in relation to the arts, whether it is music, design or gastronomic. Their location also, on the far side of the Barceloneta beach, offers them an intangible asset. Nowadays, with the Spanish Coastal Law of 1988 (Alfosea, 2019), the construction of any building is prohibited, which made the W hotel, the unique and only hotel on the beach of Barcelona. The closer competitor that W hotel is facing is the Hotel Arts, also from Marriott International and also really close to the beach coast. With a style and business model completely different however, they do not attract the same target customer.

As a second main strength, the hotel W is providing a unique experience amongst the hospitality offer in Barcelona. Their management philosophy is based on the entertainment but always in a five stars quality atmosphere. The decoration of the hotel, their venues and services are also exclusive to the W hotel brand. Their guest service, called the Wizards, the Welcome Ambassadors, the Insiders or the Whatever/Whenever agents are the equivalent to a high-quality butler service available at every moment of the guest stay. They display personality and make the W services really personal and privatized. Thanks to their six different ways to provide B&F (Wave Restaurant, Salt Restaurant, Eclipse Nightclub, W Lounge, Wet Deck Bar, Bravo, and Banqueting), they also named their Food & Beverage department B&F; because the beverage revenue is so high that it outstands the food one. Proof of their successful operations.

The last main strength analyzed is their part of the group Marriott International. The weight of such an international company allows W hotel to enjoy some of the tools already in place within Marriott. First, financially, the hotel is dependable on Marriott, which is an asset, as Marriott is a successful and profitable company. In a second hand, their database and their loyalty program; Marriott Bonvoy - which is their new loyalty program to link the Marriott Rewards, The Ritz-Carlton Rewards and Starwood Preferred Guests (SPG)- grants the hotel a wider target consumer base and a better system of retention, whether it concerns the external guests or the internal ones (employees).

Moreover, the innovation and technological department of Marriott permits the W hotel to enjoy some of the lastly innovative services of the company, such as the Marriott phone application that

allows the guest mobile check-in, mobile personalized request and even the virtual room key. The most recent innovative partnership made by Marriott is with the Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. In 2017. This Chinese company expert in digital expertise and focus on the Chinese market needs and behaviors, will allow all the hotels of Marriott a better communication through the Chinese markets and will redefine the travel experience for the Chinese guests through Marriott's brands.

Lastly, Marriott International also provide tools to the W Barcelona concerning the sustainability. Indeed, Marriott launched in 2017 a new program of sustainability called Serve 360 "Doing good in every direction". Thanks to this new project, every hotel of the chain is now interconnected via new councils called the Business Council of Marriott and the Junior Business Council. Their objectives are to put in common their knowledge and experiences to succeed at best improving their overall value chain.

After seeing the strengths of W hotel such as the availability of capital resources, their product quality, their internal structure, we'll now analyze some of its weaknesses.

As a powerful and huge business, the hotel W must have the team necessary to manage all the operations. That's why, all departments combined, W hotel it's around 400 employees in total, with almost 200 more during the high season, hired for short-term contracts and internships. This is the cause of many staff turnover. Even if W hotel manages most of the time to keep the good and promising elements by doing a transfer between departments or by promoting them internally thanks to Marriott careers, there is still a high turnover rate. Directors and managers have to train the majority of their staff every six months. It's a waste of time for some, and a decline in the service quality for others.

Another weakness spotted thanks to one visit in the hotel, is the equipment or material that sometimes is old or damaged. Specifically, the tables and chairs that are going outside during the summer, have sometimes bumps and looks like they need a revision. However, protections such as plaids and cushions are covering them when they are in use and those defects are "hidden". Regarding the maintenance and the CAPEX, there is still work to do. When they replace a machine, they try at best to add eco-friendly appliance to the CAPEX. However, some other installations have been damaged for months and currently, nothing is done to improve their functioning. Like for the solar panels; it's been months that they are not working anymore.

### 1.2.2. MACROENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS

Thanks to the PEST analysis, which focuses on the Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors, it was possible to detect some of the main threats and opportunities that W hotel is facing. First, let's analyze the Key Performance Indicators of the local market to detect the opportunities; the occupancy, the average daily room rate (ADR) and the revenue per available room (RevPAR) in Spain and in Barcelona. As it can be seen in the table in annex 1 about the occupancy rate by tourism location, from 2010 to 2017, the occupancy rate had a permanent growth in Barcelona, in Catalonia and in Spain in general. The sudden decrease in 2018 might be explained by the political situation of Catalonia and the terrorist attacks. Regarding the average daily rate in Catalonia and Spain, that can be seen in annex 2 which shows the average daily rate in Catalonia and in Spain, a slow increase can be seen throughout 2014 to 2019. The last KPI analyzed is the ADR and RevPAR used in the hotel industry to calculate the average revenue per room. As it can be seen in annex 1 and 3 (treating of the hotel sector profitability indicators, by categories in Catalonia), the ADR steadily increased over the years such as the RevPAR in Spain and in Catalonia. Those indicators represent opportunities for W hotel as they project an increase of demand for the tourism sector.

This global opportunity can be linked with a specific law operated in Barcelona; the PEUAT. The PEUAT is a Special Tourist Accommodation Plan imposed by the city council. The objective of this strategy is to suspend all tourist accommodation building licenses for a time, in order to make the tourist accommodation sector compatible with the sustainable urban model Barcelona wants to guarantee for its own residents (Ajuntament.barcelona, 2019). This let W hotel knows that no other competitors can open in the area, letting it all the space in its target market.

As another external factor that gives W hotel openings for opportunities is the Millennial generation and its behavior. Nielsen report of June 2014 (Nielsen, 2014), demonstrates that Millennials tend to prefer to work for a sustainable company. They also want to break the classic code of working for a large enterprise. W hotel with its Take Care team and more widely, with Marriott's retention programs, with study platforms and job offers, employees are treated like guest and a lot of action are undertaken to increase the level of happiness. Plus, Marriott International is really focusing on sustainability and how to diminish their print on the planet, leading in their wake the W hotel. The Millennials are the future working generation, if not already, and studies tend to prove that they prefer to work in a place like W hotel, which breaks the codes of the classic luxury 5\* hotels.

An external factor that has an impact on the performance of W hotel, and that poses a threat to the business, is the political situation of Catalonia as it has been seen before with the local KPIs (annexes 1, 2 and 3). The political disruptions after the Catalan Independence Referendum in 2017, have made the RevPAR of hotels in Barcelona declined significantly. The Catalonian political situation will remain tense and uncertain and will continue to cast a shadow over Barcelona’s tourism sector.

Another factor that poses a threat to Barcelona tourism sector is the economic trends. The amount of spending on accommodations is directly correlated to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), so typically economic recessions have a widespread direct effect on the demand of hotels. In annex 4, it can be seen the forecast of the Spain’s GDP from January 2016 to July 2019. With the political and economic context, the GDP Growth Rate in Spain is expected to fall down to 0,4 % whereas it is now at 0,6%.

### 1.3. ANALYTICAL TOOLS

#### 1.3.1. VRIO ANALYSIS

The VRIO analysis will serve as a first analytical tool to study the W hotel internal resources and capabilities, to find out if they are a source of competitive advantage.

To answer to the VRIO analysis, a firm’s resources must answer to four criteria; Valuable, Rare, costly to Imitate and Organize to capture value. But first, let’s define ‘Resources’. They can be tangible assets (what the company has) and intangible assets (what the firm can do) and can be classified into four categories; Human Capital, Financial, Physical and Organizational. It can also englobe the Capabilities which are used by exploiting the firm’s physical resources. Both Resources and Capabilities leads to Competencies. Distinctives competencies lead to unique competitive advantage.

| Resources/ Capabilities | Value | Rarity | Inimitable | Organizational support | Competitive advantage           |
|-------------------------|-------|--------|------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| - Free WIFI             | ✓     |        |            |                        | Competitive Equality            |
| - Rooms and suites      | ✓     |        |            |                        |                                 |
| - Meeting spaces        | ✓     | ✓      |            | ✓                      | Temporary Competitive Advantage |
| - High-quality service  | ✓     | ✓      |            | ✓                      |                                 |
| - B&F venues            | ✓     | ✓      |            | ✓                      |                                 |
| - Local nightlife spot  | ✓     | ✓      |            | ✓                      |                                 |

|   |   |   |   |   |                                       |
|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| - Trainings / HR management                           | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Long Term<br>Competitive<br>Advantage |
| - Sound Suite   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |                                       |
| - Partnerships  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |                                       |
| - Strong culture                                      | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |                                       |
| - Technological innovations                           | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |                                       |
| - Location  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |                                       |
| - Decoration/Design                                   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |                                       |
| - Customer experience                                 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |                                       |
| - Renowned brand                                      | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |                                       |
| - Excellent leadership                                | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |                                       |
| - Sustainability program of<br>Marriott International | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |                                       |

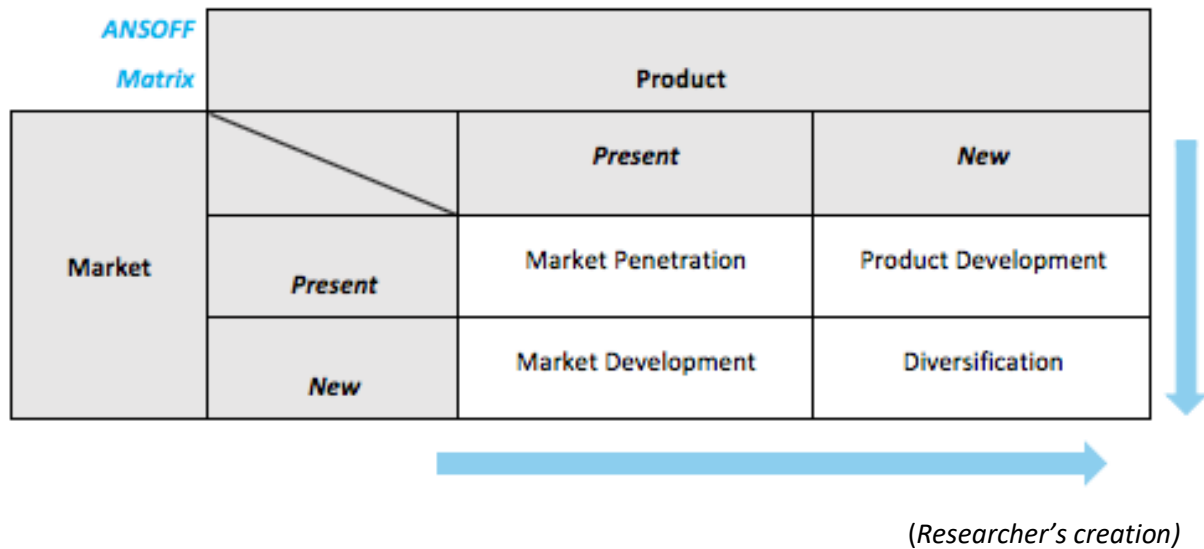
*(Researcher's creation)*

By analyzing the resources of W hotel via the VRIO analysis, it was detected that most of their products and competencies give them a long-term competitive advantage. Their main hotel's asset which are the rooms and some standards services, are given W hotel a competitive parity. However, their meeting space (the size, the views, the location), the high quality of their service and their B&F venues, which will soon host a Michelin Star Chef, are also rare but not inimitable. Lots of hotels do have beautiful view and Michelin Chef, like Hotel Arts for example. Which means that those resources give them a temporary competitive advantage according to the VRIO analysis.

The resources that allow them a sustained competitive advantage are all the resources or; typically, the branded W resources like the Sound Suite, the decoration and atmosphere, or the resources allowed by Marriott. The renowned brand, the excellent leadership and the technical innovations for example are assets provided by the group that W hotel is collecting the benefits. The main example that is the most suitable for this study is the sustainability program of Marriott, "Serve 360". Thanks to the size and the wide range of actions of Marriott, experiences and knowledge are shared amongst the properties of the group, allowing them to have access to better deals, to have a better communication and thus, are able to make significant improvements.

### 1.3.2. ANSOFF MATRIX ANALYSIS

The Ansoff Matrix is a marketing tool that helps to analyze different strategies for a company to develop itself and to grow. It is made by putting in correlation the Existing and New Markets, and the Existing and New Products.



Below is the Ansoff Matrix analysis made for W Hotel:

| Market Penetration   | Product Development  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Room rental</li> <li>- Organization of events (private and public)</li> <li>- Provide Food &amp; Beverage services</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sound Suite</li> <li>- Sunday nightlife DJ party</li> <li>- Take Care team</li> </ul> |
| Market Development   | Diversification  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop the Chinese market via the partnership with Alibaba Group</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- W Yacht / W Catamaran</li> </ul>  |

(Researcher's creation)

W hotel, with its standards operations, like the room rental, the organization of events and their B&F venues are doing a market penetration; actual market with actual products. In other words, in the market penetration, they are acting like a hotel, no more and no less.

The diversity of their offer, seen both in the SWOT and in the VRIO analysis, which can be characterized by the Sound Suite, their DJ parties or even, soon the opening of a new venue with a Michelin star Chef, are under the category of product development. All are new products in their actual market.

Thanks to Marriott and its partnership with Alibaba Group, they will develop new market (Chinese's) for their actual products. Alibaba's mission is to help businesses to improve their technology infrastructure and marketing to better connect with the consumers. Previsions say that Alibaba will be a breakout to more than half a billion of Chinese guests (News.marriott, 2017).

To conclude with the diversification, which means new product in new markets, they will intend to start a new product within their brand; the W yacht and the W catamaran, dedicated to the W guests. They will offer privatize and personalize experience that goes beyond the standard hospitality services.

Thanks to the external environment analysis, it was possible to see that W hotel has high chance to maintain its position as a leader is the hospitality of Barcelona. Thanks to the internal analysis, it was easy to detect the strong back-up of Marriott International, which gives W hotel strong assets, but also their uniqueness in the market thanks to their resources.



## 2. RESEARCH QUESTION

### 2.1. EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Nowadays, being sustainable is becoming a priority for many businesses. First because the consumers' trends are evolving and secondly, because Corporates are starting to realize the positive returns sustainability may have on their value chain, whether they are tangibles (i.e. economics, productivity) or intangibles (i.e. reputation, communication, social, environmental).

The objective of this study is to analyze **the sustainable business model of a company, and more precisely of a hotel, taking the case of the hotel W Barcelona**. At the end of this paper, it will be possible to highlight the major points of a sustainable business model for a hotel and thus, to detect the possible opportunities. Is the Hotel W a sustainable hotel? How can it improve its sustainability? Is it worth it? This study will answer all those questions.

Three main objectives have been delimited and will serve as a roadmap throughout this study. The first one is to start with an analysis of the current state of W Barcelona's sustainability, using for pattern the Disclosure-Performance Gap CSR analysis made by Xavier Font, Andreas Walmsley, Lucy Mccombes and Sara Cogotti in 2012 (Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, 2012) and the Sustainable Value Chain schema of Michael Porter, 1985 (Porter and Millar, 1985). The acquisition of Primary Data –through a survey and interviews- will corroborate the findings and help detect improvements area. The second step is focused on implementations within the hotel, in the case of this paper; the acquisition of the Biosphere Recognition as a corporate sustainable tool. As it will involve all the departments and activities of the hotel, this tool will also provide guidelines to outperform sustainable actions within their operational cycle. The third and last objective would be to analyze the findings obtained in order to present the final recommendations and conclusions.

## 2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND / LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the Businesses have started to react about their footprints, and it should be on a good way to improve the global corporate value chains. According to Michael Porter, they are the only way to make the difference about the sustainability of the planet (Porter and Kramer, 2007).

It is now important to underline the importance of the tourism sector and its role for the community. The lodging industry and more specifically, the hotel industry have a specific effect on the regional development (Holjevac, 2003; Segarra-Oña *et al.*, 2012), because of the positive and negative consequences that go with its expansion.

Using the sustainability to increase the competitiveness of a company is a subject which was largely studied and analyzed over the last few years (Porter and Millar, 1985; Vastag, Rondinelli and Kerekes, 1996; Porter and Kramer, 2007; Bernardo *et al.*, 2009). However, most of them think that, to be the most efficient, sustainability has to be taken as a road map and included it through the Triple Bottom Line via environmental management practices such as green certifications (Jesús *et al.*, 2011; Rodríguez-antón *et al.*, 2012).

For this, Corporates have already started to act -or at least pretend to- by creating CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) based on the TBL (Triple Bottom Line) though the Value Chain, by participating in CSV (Creating Shared Value), by using Green Certifications and/or Greenvertizing and sometimes by doing Greenwashing. Those terms will be developed later on, in an order that will reveal the methodology.

### 2.2.1. TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE (TBL)

In order to understand what CSR is, let's first analyze the concept of the Triple Bottom Line, developed in the 1990s by John Elkington. It includes three levels of actions; economic, social and environmental. By adding the Social and Environmental dimensions to the primary Economical goals of a company, he taught that businesses could create new "win-win-win" strategies that could benefit the company, but also its customers and the whole environment simultaneously (Elkington, 1994). By focusing on the social and environmental aspects as well, profits will now be calculated regarding all the company's operations' consequences. This performances' indicators give any organizations (for-profit, non-profit and governments) an accounting framework. The TBL can also be called the three Ps: known as People (Social), Planet (Environment) and Profits (Economic) (Slaper and Hall, 2011).

The concept was acclaimed and is still a dominant concept nowadays as it captures the proper idea of 'sustainability', which means measuring the impacts the businesses have on the world and the society around them (Slaper and Hall, 2011) and helping them to improve their operations' cycle. However, many found that the TBL framework is not precise enough or unsuitable depending the circumstances (Norman and MacDonald, 2004; Hubbard, 2006; Milne and Gray, 2013). If some environmental operations can be calculated regarding the savings a company is making, some other measures such as social ones could be harder to determine. Nowadays, profits are still meaning dollars. So, is it possible to put a price on people? Is a disabled person worth less than someone else? Can the price of endangered species be estimated? (Slaper and Hall, 2011). To evaluate social or environmental improvements, other measures have to be found. With the participation of the governments, international guidelines and indexes have been created in pair with for-profit and non-profit organizations (Detomasi, 2006; Albareda *et al.*, 2008), such as some Green Certifications (Jesús *et al.*, 2011; Rodríguez-antón *et al.*, 2012).

### **2.2.2. ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATIONS**

Incorporating environmentally sustainable management tools has been proven to be a way of increasing the competitiveness of a company and flourishing its profit at the same time (Garcia and Armas, 2007; Claver-cortés *et al.*, 2010; Segarra-Oña *et al.*, 2012). In this optic, implementation of measures and quality control mechanisms were created via environmental certifications.

A certification is an official approval to do something professionally or legally. It is also a way of ensuring that an activity or a product meets defined standards. As for another definition from the course; a Certification is a "procedure by which a third party gives written assurance that a product, process, service, or management system conforms to specified requirements" (Course Sustainability, 2019).

The issue is that certifications can vary from a country to another, whereas International Guidelines or even Standards are more rules that remain unchanged.

It exists two types of sustainable certifications; the First, Second and Third-party certifications and the Process versus Performance-based certification programs. The first-party certification is like a "self-evaluation". It is coming directly from within the company, and it's used to certified that a product or a service meets certain claims. The second-party certification could be coming from an association or

an organization who belongs to the company and provides the guarantee of a quality mark, or that standards are fulfilled. The third-party certification is coming from an independent party, which evaluates the compliance of a product with very specific and well-defined standards, usually taking care by a team of experts.

For the second type of sustainable certifications, there are the Process versus Performance-based systems. The process-based certification program focused on the internal cost savings and environmental impact mitigation. Usually, management establishes systems for monitoring significant environmental aspects, and requires outsourced consultants, which is why it is better suited for large companies as the expenses might be too important for small or medium companies. To resume, the Process-based certification is focusing on the company's efforts and not on its actual performance.

However, regarding the performance-based certification, it is all about the measurement of achievements and results and is not based on the intention to act. It also gives the access to tangible criteria that allows comparisons among certified businesses as those criteria (key indicators) are outsourced from the company itself. Last point but not least, it is also the cheaper program to implement, and are best suited for small, medium and large businesses.

The most acclaimed certification nowadays is the ISO 14001 (Chan and Hawkins, 2010) with more than 346,189 certificates worldwide in 2016 (Eshcon.co.uk, 2017). It's an Environmental Management System (EMS) created in compliance with the European Union's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). Often, EMSs are working in pair with other standardized Management System (Bernardo *et al.*, 2009) like the ISO 9000 about the Quality Management or the ISO 28000 focusing on the Supply Chain. All those Management Systems and Quality Systems regroup standards to help a business to minimize and handle at best their operational effects on the environment, because remind it, ISO is the International Organization for Standardization.

Other organizations like the Green Key Global are offering their own eco-label, designed specifically to a market, in this case, the Tourism Industry. Nowadays, the Green Key is awarded to more than 3,000 establishments in 57 countries (Greenkey.global, 2019). The standards were put in place by the Foundation for Environmental Education and answered to many rules in order to keep a good balance between the tourism industry and a sustainable operation cycle for the environment.

However, all those environmental certifications have a price. With the participation of governments, certifications and recognition can sometimes be free (Detomasi, 2006). The Biosphere recognition is one example. The Biosphere certification has been created by the Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI), the UNESCO, and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), sponsored by the United Nations Foundation (Biospheretourism.com, 2019). Even if they offer a payable certification, very similar at the ISO 14001, they do propose a Biosphere recognition for free. Their main objective is to push the businesses of the Tourism industry to become more responsible, by making them understand that investing in sustainability will allow them greater returns, whether they are social, economic or environmental.

Most of those green certifications require reports, studies process and a strict following, either from the organization that deliver the recognition than by the head management of the company asking for it. For this, department such as Corporate Social Responsibility started to emerge within the companies.

### **2.2.3. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)**

CSR means Corporate Social Responsibility, also called “corporate citizenship” in some countries or “Conscious Capitalism” (Nielsen, 2014). In this case, CSR means companies that are conscious of their impact on the environment and on the society in general. Thus, they are specifically trying to do actions for and around those issues to help or prevent them. Which means find benefits for the business itself, consumers and the society as a whole; the Triple Bottom Line.

However, as the TBL, CSR could mean different things for everybody and the range of action is quite large. Some can focus on social, other on environmental issues. For some business it can be non-profit association or volunteering, whereas for others it is directly included in their business plan and actions can be seen through their operational and strategical levels. Plus, they are adding profit for the company, whereas others are just philanthropic.

Nonetheless, everything can be related. According to Michael Porter; corporations are the ones able to create resources, as long as it means making revenues for them (Porter and Kramer, 2007). The CSR policies are here to help businesses recognized what can be their profit and help them put actions in order to find benefits for both the company and the society (Windsor, 2006). It is recommended that

CSR must be included within the business model and thus, be a proper discipline within a company. It is important that CSR policies are aligned with the core values and objectives of the business and they should be applied for all the activities through the Value Chain (Porter and Kramer, 2007; McNulty and Davis, 2012). Also, it is primordial that the management team is being involved in this process (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994; Kasturi Rangan, 2015). For whatever actions, environmental certifications can provide a roadmap for businesses to ensure that they are following the right path.

#### **2.2.4. THE VALUE CHAIN**

The Value Chain developed by Michael Porter (Porter and Millar, 1985), is a set of interdependent activities which are interconnected amongst themselves by linkages. Those linkages appear when the result of an activity affects the cost of effectiveness of another (Porter and Millar, 1985; Porter and Kramer, 2007).

If taking the example of the hospitality industry as this paper will treat about it; sustainability could be integrated in all the department of a hotel, through the Value Chain, from the hotel's infrastructure to the operational services (Porter and Kramer, 2007). However, it can be divided in two categories; the Primary Activities and the Supporting Activities.

In the Primary activities, it can be found the logistics, the operations, the sales & marketing and, in a more general way, the service itself. For the supporting activities, it englobes the hotel's infrastructure, the Human Resources department, the Technology Development department, and all the "back-up" services, vital for a business.

For the supporting activities, in the Human Resources department, there is sustainable actions through social operations in majority; personal development and training, good working conditions, good benefits from the company as healthcare for example. In the supporting activities, there is also the innovation and technology development which are vital for a sustainable business nowadays (Hanks *et al.*, 2008). Through these activities, it can be found innovative solutions thanks to new researches practices, and new data. Also, directly from the business infrastructure, there is sustainable actions and decisions in the philosophy or in the business plan of the hotel, that can be shown by a full transparency of their engagement and financial actions to their shareholders and to the public in general.

For the Primary activities, sustainability can be implemented in a “easier” way. When looking for the logistics, which could be inbound (storage) and outbound (warehouse), sustainability actions regarding the impacts of the transportation could be implemented, as the choice of a better packaging for the amenities. The operational level can also include reducing the consumption of water and energy through the daily activities. The Marketing and Sales department can work together to put in place a special advertising and communication around prices or offers, but more important, they have to inform the guest about their actions.

In another study, Arno Kourula and Minna Halme distinguished three different typologies of Corporate Responsibility (Kourula and Halme, 2008);

1. Philanthropy (i.e. charities, donations, volunteering).
2. CR Integration (stress on practicing existing operations in a more responsible way).
3. CR Integration (stress on creating new business models to resolve social or environmental existing issues).

They could work together, or they could be independent. As seen earlier, the standards and regulations regarding the TBL framework are not well defined yet.

However, as good as could be all those CSR practices, they focus more on an external agenda (Porter and Kramer, 2011; Camilleri, 2014), and have a limited impact on making the profit as great as possible. The ways that corporates are making profit have to be reconceived. Also, analysis shows that a strategic approach is more beneficial for a company than an altruistic one (Husted and De Jesus Salazar, 2006). They have to connect their economic development and success to the well-being of the social environment. That is called Shared Value (Porter and Kramer, 2011).

### **2.2.5. CREATING SHARED VALUE (CSV)**

According to Michael E. Porter; Creating Shared Value could be represented as “Corporate policies and practices that enhance the competitiveness of the company while simultaneously advancing economic and social conditions in the communities in which the company operates” (Porter and Kramer, 2011).

For a long time, resolving social issues was considered as a government’s task, and NGO’s (Porter and Kramer, 2011). And nowadays, the non-governmental organizations have an important voice regarding

the global governance, alongside the businesses and governments themselves. It can be called “relational governance” (Midttun, 2005; Kourula and Halme, 2008).

Yet, it has been seen that the Society and the Governments are not the ones producing wealth, businesses and corporates are. However, governments and states have the legal word, so they must participate (Detomasi, 2006; Albareda *et al.*, 2008) by creating more specific rules and regulations and by imposing international measurements for operations and reports. The governments’ systems regarding CSR practices is still neither powerful, nor adequate (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005).

Corporates have to understand that responding to society’s social needs does not mean losing money or using the shareholders’ money on something that doesn’t personally touch them. We all depend on someone or something else. A company can’t sell products if there are no suppliers. It can’t sell goods if there are no customers. It is primordial to understand the principle of sharing in Shared Value. A company’s success is influenced directly by its environment (Porter and Kramer, 2011). With the technologies and innovations developed each day, new operating methods can be put in place. It will result on improving the efficiency, the speed, the quality and the availability of many products and services that, therefore, will increase the overall functioning of the businesses. This is called Shared Value.

Shared Value or CSV (Creating Shared Value) can be created on three different levels within a company. The first method is by redefining the practices and operations directly in the value chain. The second way is to reconceive the value proposition of the products and services within the markets. The third level is to enable or solidify the cluster development within the communities the business is directly involved (Porter and Kramer, 2011).

But first of all, it is really important that each firm focuses on the specific social challenges that most intersect with its needs first. Taking for example Nespresso, a worldwide company that introduced the AAA Sustainable Quality Program by created shared value on improving their local clusters’ connections (Porter and Kramer, 2011; Matzler *et al.*, 2013). By supporting their small suppliers, it resulted on the improvement of growing and harvesting techniques, thus, an improvement of the whole farming functioning. Thanks to those actions, Nespresso not only increased the efficiency of small farmers, but also increased the quality of their/its coffee and therefore, their/its revenues, both for them, and for those local clusters.



Doing good and in the meantime, earn profit is an asset. But shared value is also about increasing the competitiveness between businesses. In the case of this paper, when focusing on the hospitality and the tourism industries in general and in Barcelona, where the competition is at saturation, being competitive is not something everyone should think about, it is an obligation for every company, it is survival to not get down by the competition.

All those steps go through the relationship the companies will established with their customers and communities. For this, communication is the key. After an efficient internal communication, which involved a specific department and the heads of a company (Kasturi Rangan, 2015), businesses must transmit their ideas and communicate to their external environment. That's why it is important to know the importance of the stakeholders.

#### **2.2.6. STAKEHOLDERS**

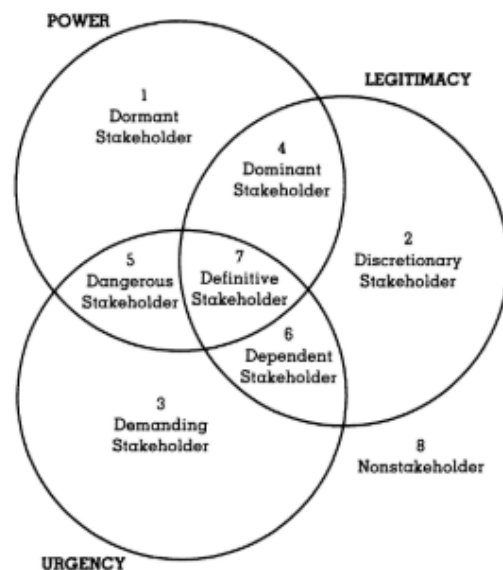
First, a stakeholder can be anyone that have a relationship with a company, to one extant or another (Mitchell and Wood, 1997). Stakeholders could be classified in two groups; Internal and External. The internal stakeholders are the ones working in and for the company, from employees to owners, passing by the management teams. Regarding the external ones, it can be wide. It could include almost everyone such as *direct* stakeholders; suppliers, investors and consumers, to more *indirect* parties like the Government or the Society.

Stakeholders can also be classified through another groups; Primary versus Secondary ones. The Primary Stakeholders englobe the people working for the company and the ones that are directly involved with it; the management, the staff, the shareholders, the strategic clients and the strategic partners. There is a difference between the Primary stakeholders and the Internal stakeholders. Concerning the Secondary Stakeholders, it encloses then, the clients, the competitors, the vendors, the Associations, the Government, the Medias and the Banks.

There are also other ways to classified Stakeholders; by using the Power, Legitimacy and Urgency model by Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997, which define the stakeholder behavior according to those three characteristics. Stakeholders seen themselves one, two or up to three attributes interconnected, and are then classified with proper names.

But before that, the most important thing is to recognize the Claimants versus the Influencers. Stakeholders can be divided again between the “groups that have a legal, moral or presumed claim on the company and the groups that have an ability to influence the company’s behavior, direction, process or outcomes” (Embracing CSR, 2019). Then, it is important to differentiate the actual relationships from the potential ones (latent stakeholders).

Regarding the Power dependence, it refers to the influence the company has in the relationship with its stakeholders; Are the stakeholders dominant or dependent to the company? In few cases, the dependence relationship can translate itself by a mutual power. Concerning the Legitimacy of those relationships, it means “relationship in terms of desirability or appropriateness” (Mitchell and Wood, 1997). It is crucial to recognize that Stakeholders have claims on the company (moral, social and economic) but can also not be implied within the company. The bases for Legitimacy can be “individual, organizational, and/or societal” (Mitchell and Wood, 1997). The Urgency refers to the expectations of the stakeholders, “the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention” (Mitchell and Wood, 1997).



(Mitchell and Wood, 1997)

All the stakeholders are not of the same importance, as their involvement differ. The Latent stakeholders, englobing the ones who possess only one attribute; the Dormant, the Discretionary and the Demanding, are the ‘less important’, because they are the less ‘complicated’. Then comes the Expectant stakeholders; the ones who have at least two attributes; the Dominant, the Dependent and

the Dangerous. The last group, and the most important is the Definitive, including all the stakeholders that reunite the three attributes, which make of them the more involved in the company.

The general manager then, has to be involved with the Definitive stakeholders in priority, those who are in the three dynamisms. But not only. It is also important to try to engage the stakeholders coming from group 4, 5 and 6 of the Power, Legitimacy and Urgency model. As said in their names, the Dangerous, Dominant and Dependent stakeholders are not irrelevant.

All in all, the stakeholders can be identified through a table putting in common the criteria of Importance and Influence. The ones with high importance and high influence will be the most important stakeholders, they need to be involved in processes. Then, there are the two groups of high influence and low importance and vice-versa, which means that they are stakeholders of importance, and the general manager of a company need them in order to positively operate. Then, the low importance/low influence stakeholders can be ignored, as long as we take care of the primary ones.

Using the involved stakeholders will allow a company to develop a competitive advantage through “shared value creation strategies” (Embracing CSR, 2019). It seems logic that more a stakeholder is invested in a company, more expectations he will have of its success. That’s why communication is the key.

### **2.2.7. VALUE COMMUNICATION (GREENVERTIZING OR GREEN MARKETING)**

It has been seen that doing good as a business positively help their communities and environment. It creates more profit and more revenue. But not only. It also gives a positive image to their brand (Nielsen, 2014). This creates a virtuous circle that reunite the businesses’ interests to the consumers’ feelings to participate in something good (Meyer, 2009).

The consumers have thousands of products to choose from every day. As said earlier, in the hotel industry in Barcelona, it is even more important to be special, unique, different, thus; remembered. Communication about their CSR and CSV practices is the key process for every company in order to increase their customers’ awareness and make them participate, make them feel important. Transparency is crucial to earn trust (Porter and Kramer, 2007).

When a communication is made on a special product or service regarding its ecological benefits, because the objective is to reach someone, it's called "Green Marketing" or "Greenvertizing" (Banerjee, Gulas and Iyer, 1995; Grant, 2008).

However, if the word is new, the concept is not. In her book, Jacquelyn Ottman "Green Marketing: Challenges and Opportunities for the New Marketing Age" (1993), calculated the increase of green advertising in 1993 by analyzing the numbers of green ads. "The volume of green print ads grew by 430% and that of green TV ads grew by 367% between 1989 and 1990" (Banerjee, Gulas and Iyer, 1995). A more recent study from 2013 shows that green advertising almost triple since 2006 (Terrachoice, 2010; Delmas and Burbano, 2011).

However, a transparent communication can sometimes be obsolete, as hiding some details behind bigger facts. It can also mislead the customer. Corporates have to be careful not to exercise 'fake' green marketing, this is called "greenwashing".

#### **2.2.8. GREENWASHING**

One of the main issues faced by companies, and especially, large multinational brands, is the problem to do greenwashing. Indeed, the Greenwashing is a marketing method used by companies to orient their communication towards a "green" positioning, eco-friendly actions. According to the Jakarta Post, (*Commentary: When CSR is neither profit nor public good*) (Jakartapost.org, 2008); Greenwashing is the mix of 'green' and 'brainwashing' words. This practice began in the mid-1960s (Investopedia, 2019), at the same time the whole 'environmental' and 'sustainability' standards and trends appeared. But it was Jay Westervelt, a New York environmentalist that first used the word in 1986, in an essay concerning the hotels' practices to leave a note in each room to encourage their guests to reuse their towels, in order to "help saving the environment" (Wikipedia.org, 2019). Often, this marketing method is used by large companies, usually multinationals, since their actions are the ones that impact the most the environment. So, in order to "clean" their image, those businesses are using greenwashing campaigns.

It can be translated through actions like changing the packaging of a product, sometimes as simply as changing the color to a light green with leaves that will make you think this product is somehow sustainable, even if there are chemicals additives inside. Sometimes, to pay an environmental certification can sometimes be seen as Greenwashing because, if a business complies with a lot of rules, there are some, important ones, that are occasionally completely avoided (Jesús *et al.*, 2011).

It also exists the Greenwashing Index Scoring Criteria (hbr.org, 2019) to help recognize wrong advertising, divided in five criteria; The advertisement can

1. ...mislead with words.
2. ...mislead with visuals or graphics.
3. ...make a green claim that is vague or seemingly unprovable.
4. ...overstate or exaggerate how green the product/company/service actually is.
5. ...leave out or mask important information, making the green claim sound better than it is.

The Bimini Bay Resort and Casino, Bahamas by Conrad Hilton is an excellent example of greenwashing. As part of the Hilton Worldwide, they display proudly their ISO Certification ISO 9001 (about Quality management) and ISO 14001 (about Environment management) on their website, and go even further by being “transparent” about their sustainable mission: “To benefit this and future generations by actively managing our business through the lens of sustainability (...) Protect our world globally.” The Bahamian islands of Bimini are famous for their biodiversity and marine life and were hosting for more than 20 years, scientific expeditions and studies about this environment. However, the hotel involved transforming an entire (big) part of the island, by destructing an important marine ecosystem build up by Mangrove, derouting the primary resources from the locals and burning trashes that issues CO2 emissions. It is to note that the Mangroves are a fertile breeding grounds for fishes and results have already been seen, a decrease in conch, fish numbers, and other endangered species like sharks, which is threatening the lives of the local people who are especially fishermen (Tourismconcern.org.uk, 2019).

However, even if the practices of Greenwashing tend to decline (Terrachoice, 2010), it is still the main source of doubts for the consumers (Chen, Bernard and Rahman, 2019).

To better understand the reasons for pro-environmental practices within companies; Maria Jesus Bonilla-Priego, Juan Jose Najera and Xavier Font, in the study “Environmental Management decision-making in certified hotels” (Jesús *et al.*, 2011) differentiated four groups of hotels: the Strategic hotels (22%) (with high levels of integrated environmental management), the Followers (48%), the Greenwashers (11%) and the Laggards (19%) (with low levels of integrated environmental management). The results show that companies are still driven by their own intrinsic motivation and aren’t able to take a long-term plan when it concerns the sustainability of their businesses. Most of them are still choose to act the minimum to avert the legal inquires (Jesús *et al.*, 2011).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. TYPE OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH APPROACH

This work is a Descriptive research as it focuses on the collect of primary data to establish the actual sustainable business model of the hotel W Barcelona. But this work can also be seen as a Predictive research as it involved some form of human behavior condition which take in account a baseline (sustainable business model) already known.

At all time, it was an Action/Business research as it required the involvement of professionals and a close collaboration between practitioners and the researcher.

*“The application of the scientific method in searching for the truth about business phenomena. These activities include defining business opportunities and problems, generating and evaluating ideas, monitoring performance, and understanding the business process.” (Zikmund, 2010)*

The Ontological question in this management research is the Constructionism. It asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors, in this case by the employees and the guests’ perceptions and reactions about a specific subject; sustainability.

The researcher’s Epistemology position for this paper is Realism. Whereas Positivism and Interpretivism, Realism thinks that no form of science completely relies on theories and that there are always some aspects that can’t be quantified and deeply analyzed. In the case of this paper, scientific researches with the collection of evidence are priory made to establish a context. However, the importance of the social factor and its subjective dimension made this research experimental.

The research strategy or *research paradigm* used is Methodology, with deductive (general to specific) and inductive (observations to theory) researches. The quantitative method is the interpretation of phenomena and the qualitative an empirical assessment. Accordingly, the research approach of this paper is more Inductive. The process of Induction is the process of the Hill Climbing.

State the Question → Observations → Form Hypotheses → Test & Analyze → Draw Conclusion → Theory.

### 3.2. DATA COLLECTION

As per the two previous approaches, it has been defined that the qualitative method is the one that suited best this study. However, the addition of the survey to get quantitative data filled a weak spot in the main method.

Consequently, this paper is divided in two parts. The first part is a qualitative study and analysis of the sustainability of the hotel W Barcelona. With for purpose to understand and interpret the functioning of the Sustainability factor in the W Barcelona hotel.

For this analysis, secondary data was used to get a scientific background as the researcher took as template two scientific papers already published; “Corporate Social Responsibility: the disclosure-performance gap” published in 2012 (Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, 2012) and “Strategy & Society: the link between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility” published in 2006 (Porter and Kramer, 2006).

Then, it used primary data for the in-deep analysis, all the publicly information available via internet was scrutinized, a site inspection with a consultant provided by the city was done and most of the knowledge came from in-depth exploratory and semi-structured explanatory interviews. With a studied group selected intentionally, composed by Executives Chefs of W Barcelona such as directors of departments, or specific responsible in sustainability for Marriott International. The Data type are the words. The Data form is most of it, *open-ended interviews questions*. However, *semi-structures reflective interviews* were made, with predetermined questions, in an order that can be modified, to get an approach more personal, more concerned with people’s feelings. The purpose of those questions is to stimulate the interviewee’s reflection and find significant leads for the theoretical exploration. For the last part of the interviews, the objective is to reveal some general themes and patterns that could later on be analyzed. The results are particular findings that are less likely to be generalizable.

A minimum of six in-depth interviews was required and exceed with a total of 12 interviews, allowing further research and an even deeper understanding. See Annex 5 for the detailed Interview Schedule and Annex 6 for the interviews sum up. Refer to annex 7 to 18 for the individual’s interviews.

The second part is using a quantitative data research to support the findings and start discussions. The survey is a test hypothesis, checking the cause and effect, and verifying predictions. The studied group

is 100 people strong and selected randomly through the employees of W Barcelona. The 18 questions survey was made online and shared via professionals' emails accounts to the respondents. Moreover, relatives and friends, who were not aware of environmental concepts and sustainable business model, were questioned previously as a pilot survey, to determine if all the questions were understandable and in-context, before publishing the actual study. This quantitative data research allowed the researcher to get a maximum of answers and thus, point of view, from various departments. It was also test-hypothesis, as it confirmed theoretical researches and results made during the theoretical background.

The first part of the results can be generalizable findings about the global sustainable feelings amongst the employees and may be applied to other groups. However, the second part of the survey, which focused on the W Barcelona will give particular findings and will help for the qualitative study.

A minimum sample of 80 survey was required and thanks to the good proceedings, a sample of 100 had been retained, allowing the access to more opinions that could be later on put in correlation with the previous results. See annexes 19 and 20 for the survey and its answers.

Consequently, to collect and analyze the primary data, in the form of interviews, transcriptions of the interviews were made, sometimes translating them in English, thanks to notes and a voice recorder. Then, the collection of the data was summarized in an Excel sheet. The proceeding for the survey was the same, with the addition of graphs and tables in order to provide a clearer overall picture of the results. Particular observations have been crossed with scientific researches to try to determine where improvements could be made to transform the business model of the hotel W Barcelona.

For few points, secondary data was acquired, and its limitations have been recognized. The researcher was aware that the results found on the government websites and priory made scientific studies were limited because not explicitly applicable to the research subject, the W hotel Barcelona. However, such sources were important in the gathering of information process, as it gave a solid background to put in application the final recommendations. The active participation of the governments and city council in this research is to underline as they are deeply involved in the implementation of sustainable corporate tool for companies.



### **3.3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All along this research paper, the researcher assures the quality and the integrity of this research. The majority of the information gathered was freely available in the public domain. The rest of the information was gathered with the agreement and the help of the hotel's management. It does not involve an analysis of pre-existing data which contains sensitive or personal information. This study does not involve sensitive information but analyze facts that was freely available or given willingly by the company. Moreover, none information was copied or stolen from another work or study already existing.

For any direct and indirect exchanges made with research respondents via interviews or via the survey, informed consents were read and signed. Those consents stipulate that the information shared with the researcher could be revealed in the study, and that their personal details and position could be revealed for the study and published. Moreover, all respondents have participated in this study willingly. However, as it concerns the case of an individual hotel, no names or private data will be shared within this study. All the information related to the private information of the respondents will be find in the annexes of the thesis to secure their anonymity and confidentiality.

## 4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1. SCIENTIFIC TEMPLATE FOR THE ANALYSIS

As said during Methodology, the template used for the background of this analysis two studies. The first one is “the disclosure-performance gap analysis” (Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, 2012).

This study scored ten hotel chains (Accor International, Barcelo Hotels & Resorts, Carlson Group, Hilton, Iberostar, Intercontinental Hotels Group, Marriott International, RIU Hotels, Sol Melia and Starwood Hotels & Resorts), mostly based in Europe, on their sustainability claims and then analyzed their practices and implementations. They focused on the differences between the disclosure of the companies and their actual doing. This study will use their indices of research, with some variations as it will not base its entire focus on the disclosure-performance gap. Hence, it will not take in account their weighting and neither all their criteria as some were hardly achievable in the context of the research (internship).

The second scientific paper that this analysis will rely on is “The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility” (Porter and Kramer, 2006). This paper emphasizes on the relationship that the Society has with the businesses and developpes the principle of Shared Value. It uses the Value Chain to detect all the activities that rely on the company’s course of business. This template highlights all the “inside-out” linkages of a company, which means all the intersection points that the company has with the society, and thus, create a sustainable superior corporate performance through the overall operational process of a company.

The researcher will use the value chain pattern provided by Michael Porter (Porter and Kramer, 2006) and the criteria used in the “Disclosure-performance gap analysis” (Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, 2012) to make his own template to analyze the current state of sustainability in the W hotel Barcelona.

Porter categorized two sorts of activities; the primary activities and the support activities. The primary activities are about the production and distribution of a service or product. They englobe five major departments; inbound logistics, outbound logistics, operations, marketing and sales and service. The support activities are, according to their names, activities that help improve the efficiency and quality

of the primary activities. They are divided in four main areas; firm infrastructure, human resources management, technology development and procurement.

The criteria studied in the first scientific paper (Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, 2012) were classified in six main themes; Corporate Policies, Labor Issues, Socioeconomic Issues, Environmental Issues, Customer Engagement and Transparency. Those criteria can be found in different part of Porter's Value Chain. The Corporate policies, and the labor issues are directly involved in the support activities, such as firm infrastructure and human resources management. The others are activities which can be mostly found in the primary activities of a company. The socioeconomic issues, environmental issues can be dealt within the inbound, outbound logistics and through the operations. Customer engagement is coordinated via marketing and sales and through the service.

This study template reveals three main areas that form the body of a company, and therefore, the researcher will use it as template for the analysis of the W Barcelona sustainability:

### **1. FIRM INFRASTRUCTURE**

- a. Serve 360
- b. Procurement
- c. Transparency
- d. Biosphere Recognition

### **2. LOGISTICS**

- a. Productions (Operations)
  - Energy and water consumption
  - Trash disposal & recycling
  - Utilization of hazardous material
- b. Suppliers Transportations
  - Food and beverage
  - Outsourced laundry service
  - Amenities

### **3. HUMAN MANAGEMENT (SERVICE)**

- a. External guest
- b. Internal guest

### **1. FIRM INFRASTRUCTURE**

The firm infrastructure englobes the head decisions that form the body of the company, like the procurement and the corporates policies, the financing. It is about managing the relationship with the suppliers and stakeholders via Marriott International. But also, the planning of objectives, which can include government practices and internal decision making. The theme of the transparency is discussed within this area as well.

### **2. LOGISTICS (OPERATIONS)**

Within the logistics, it can be found all the socioeconomics and environmental issues that can be dealt with by the company. This section is divided in two parts. The first one is the Production. It encompasses everything about the emissions and waste of the business; energy and water consumption, food waste, usage of hazardous material, utilization of natural resources, conservation of raw material and recycling.

The second part is about the transportations impact (inbound). Who are the suppliers? Which vehicles are they using? Are they local? Do they come for afar? Do they have green certifications? Are they fair-trade? And those suppliers are about the food, the amenities, the outsourced service as the laundry, the material.

To sum up, Logistics encircles all the actions that are a part of the Operation cycle of the hotel W Barcelona.

### **3. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

The last area is about the Human Resources Management. It is also divided in two part, as there is in one hand the internal guest and the in a second hand, the external consumer. When regarding to their internal customer, it is about their policies and methods about the working conditions, the recruitment and the training of the employees, which can also lead to the relationship with universities, the coaching and the retention of these, the compensations and benefits. To sum up, this part is mostly about the management of the labor issues.

Concerning the external guest, this part could better be called "Service". Service is neither more nor less everything that represent the communication with the external customer. In this part, customer engagement, customer service, after-sale service and marketing and sales are covered.

## 4.2. ANALYSIS OF THE W BARCELONA SUSTAINABILITY

### 4.2.1. FIRM INFRASTRUCTURE

W Barcelona is part of the hotel group Marriott International, and therefore enjoys the benefits to be part of such an important group. In the case of this study about the sustainability, it is important to notice the new sustainable program that Marriott launched early 2017. This program called “Serve 360 - Doing good in every direction”, works around the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations. Divided in four pillars; “Nurture our world”, “Sustain responsible operations”, “Empower through opportunity” and “Welcome all and advance human rights”, they have for objectives for 2025 to make a “sustainable and positive impact wherever (they) do business” (Serve 360 Report, 2018), by integrating the Triple Bottom Line factors within their value chain.

#### ***“SERVE 360 - DOING GOOD IN EVERY DIRECTION”***

Those four pillars have councils that rule them at an international level, including the participation of worldwide CEOs. “Sustain”, “Empower” and “Welcome” are represented by committee that works together to create new field researches and standards, always in the optic to improve the operation cycle. However, the pillar “Nurture our world” is the one that is the most interesting for this analysis as it requires a Serve 360 Champion to oversee and manage the new actions within each hotel of the group. This branch is also divided in two councils; the Business Councils and the Junior Business Councils, then split geographically. For the case of the hotel W Barcelona, it is included in the Northern Spain market. Thus, it exists a Business Council of Northern Spain, led by the General Manager of the Hotel AC Forum in Barcelona and a Junior Business Council, which have for president the General Manager of the W Barcelona. The objective of those assemblies is to support the values of Marriott by creating new added value for their companies and within the communities where they operate. This include a lot of involvement and social actions.

As part of those actions, it can be found; a successful “Dona tu ropa” campaign at the initiative of a clothing donation in collaboration with the Humana Foundation, another one completed with UNICEF, and have participated in the Red Cross Blood Donation Marathon in 2018. They did and are repeating the event support fundraising of Pedalea X La Marato de TV3 for health organizations, helping communities such as AECC (the Spanish Association against Cancer). They also participate in the organization of Special Olympics, a sport association that promotes sports and other activities for people with intellectual disabilities, promoting solidarity, personal development and social integration.

In 2018, they also participated in the World Clean-up day, by cleaning the beach and the sea bottom of the Barceloneta, in partnership with the Barcelona Forum District, with the support of Diagonal Mar. The results were the collect of 565 kilos of waste and an increase of awareness. Following those good results, and by their location, the W Barcelona choose to put the accent on this event during 2019 as well, organizing it first, independently of Marriott, then with the help of the Business Council.

In addition to those councils, there are the Serve 360 councils. It looks less formal than the Business Council and the Junior Business Council because passionate employee can volunteer and be representants of their hotel. There is no election or special job attribution for the people participating in those meetings. In most case they are also part of the Take Care team of their hotels, that will be seen later on. In this case, this council is led by the General Manager of the Renaissance in Barcelona. The Spa Director and the Style (Housekeeping) Director of W Barcelona are the representants for the hotel. The goals of the Serve 360 meetings are to create a strong network amongst the Marriott properties, to learn from other and be able to increase the best corporate practices. It is also about putting their forces together in order to achieve the best prices amongst the suppliers of the same region. More details about the proper role that Marriott International holds about the suppliers will be given in the Procurement part later on.

In the case of this study and thanks to the field experience and interviews, it was possible to observe for example, the research of a new supplier to quit the plastic bottles for the mineral water. Amongst the solutions found, there was “Agua en Caja Mejor” that the W Hotel tried as a pilot program on the beach and near the pools during the summer 2019, but also mineral water in aluminum cans, that the hotel AC Forum tried as pilot program as well. The objective of those Serve 360 Council is to regroup the different opinions, evaluate which solution is the best suited and then, via the Procurement (the relationship between Marriott International and their suppliers), try to negotiate with the suppliers to arrive at the best prices and to create a product purchase agreement for the whole brand or company.

### ***PROCUREMENT***

For the procurement regarding the food and beverage goods, the hotel W Barcelona has to follow the “global procurement supplier conduct guidelines” (Annex 21) of Marriott when contracting a new supplier. This document englobes fourteen guidelines, going from the protection of intellectual property to the waste and resource management, passing by the supplier diversity and integrity. Thanks to this document, the suppliers of the W Barcelona have to answer to specific business conduct

and ethical guidelines, which attest of their social and environmental responsibility. And although the initiative came from Marriott International, it also benefits the W Barcelona. As seen also during the firm infrastructure Marriott strives to improve the social dimension of the sustainability. Through global employment and the defense of the human rights amongst the procurement conduct, Marriott expects that their suppliers should be focused on the guidelines instituted by the United Nations for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that themselves are following. Also, thanks to the procurement of Marriott International via their supplier's chain, they also have a program focused on the protection of the biodiversity for the fishes and seafood called "Responsible Seafood". It forbids any hotel, and in the case the W Barcelona, to buy fishes or sea creatures that might be in danger of extinction, such as the blue fins tuna or even sharks' meat. To go deeper for a safe and responsible food and product supply chain, Marriott International asked as a new policy and within their 2025 goals, to buy only free-range eggs. The hotel W Barcelona changed their eggs suppliers beginning of 2019.

The other main procurement that W Hotel is endorsing is the contract for the amenities. This time, it is not a procurement from Marriott International but from the brand itself, W Hotels. The main positive point regarding the amenities is the recent change of the brand that they made. They switched their own brand "Bliss" (the same name as the spas in the W hotels), to Comfort Zone. At the sight of the composition of the Bliss' products, it was clear that there was nothing eco-friendly or sustainable in the amenities. However, Comfort Zone is a brand really committed to sustainability, as it is included in their mission, vision and values. They improved their value chain by focusing their efforts on the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations (SDGs), as is doing Marriott International. From the product itself that contains natural and biological products (76.5%), to the packaging, which is mostly made from renewable sources (61,8%) and thus, highly biodegradable, this company has earned the B Corp certification, which praise their social and environmental performance (Comfortzone.it, 2016).

### ***TRANSPARENCY***

Thanks also the new program of sustainability of Marriott, new standards and guidelines have been put in place. And for all those rules that Marriott provided, new tools are now at the disposition of the workers. All the information can be found on the MGS platform (corporate website) of Marriott and some directly via their public website.

Amongst all the available information, it can be found the Standards and Corporate Policies of Marriott International. The Marriott's standards for the W Hotels equals to 506 in Europe (606 including all regions), and they answer to 93 Marriott International Policies. Those include sustainable corporate practices such as Ethical Conduct (MIP-01), Harassment and Professional Conduct (MIP-05), Equal Employment Opportunity (MIP-38), Suppliers Diversity (MIP-42), and Human Rights (MIP-48) amidst others.

Especially, one other tool catches the attention for this analysis; the Just Report. Now, Marriott requires from all their hotels and properties, to report any actions that concerns sustainability. It goes from the social dimension like a blood donation organized in the hotel, to the environmental one, like changing the lights by LEDs. Everything has to be reported within this platform. This action falls within the framework of the sustainable goals Marriott wants to achieve for 2025. Marriott's Sustainability Reports are published every year with the data's updates found on the Just Report platform or shared by the General Managers. This fact is interesting when looking for the criteria of Transparency detailed in the scientific paper of the disclosure-performance gap analysis (Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, 2012). Even if Marriott International choose to publish their sustainable reports, the hotel W Barcelona has for now, no document to show to their clients.

### ***BIOSPHERE RECOGNITION***

The last point that is going to be studied for this analysis regarding the firm infrastructure of the W Barcelona is the acquisition of the Biosphere Recognition. Until 2017, the hotel W Barcelona owned the Green Key certification. Which was then cancelled by the management, arguing that the price of the acquisition wasn't worth it anymore, due to the big implication for the environmental practices of sustainability but very few about the social dimension, that are so dear to Marriott International. Moreover, the Biosphere relies on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Serve 360° program of Marriott. The social implication is fundamental.

The Biosphere Recognition is going to be a sustainable management tool for the W Barcelona on a long-term process. It is designed to help them improve their overall value chain by involving sustainability in all the operational and administrative steps. Therefore, this point will be developed later on in the Discussions part as well, as it involves a longstanding following and commitment.

The Biosphere is an official recognition that attest the employment of good practices within a touristic business. It is also a sustainable management tool, designed to guide companies to exercise



better practices while running their businesses, and to ensure also benefits for the destinations where those businesses are implemented. It exists the Biosphere certification and the Biosphere Agreement/Commitment. While the first one has a cost, the second one is the first step for any touristic businesses in Barcelona to tend to more respectful corporate activities. That's also this Agreement which is going to be implemented in the hotel W Barcelona and studied deeper later in this paper.

The "Comprimís per a la Sostenibilitat Turística Barcelona Biosphere" (Biosphere Commitment) was created and is delivered by the Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI), an international non-profit NGO created during the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism in 1995. It is sponsored by UNESCO, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the European Union (EU). The Biosphere program relies on the 17 sustainable development goals of the United Nations (SDGs), the World Charter for Sustainable Tourism +20 and the precept of the Paris Climate Summit (COP21) (Biospheretourism.com, 2019). Those guidelines are designed in function of the destinations as objectives will be different depending the location. For example, the sustainable development goal of accessibility to water for everyone is not the same in Africa than in Spain. The Biosphere can be seen as an 'intelligent' tool.

One of the specificities of the Biosphere Commitment whereas any others green certifications is the involvement of the principle of Shared Value, as seen earlier in the Literature Review (Porter and Kramer, 2011). Their commitment to the destination of implementation on the long-term process is their main strengths as it will be developing the economy of the locations and therefore, increase the business activities and positive relationships. Moreover, they do not only focus on the environmental and economical sides of sustainability, but put the accent on the social part, which is the vector of shared sustainability.

The other distinctive specificity of the Biosphere Agreement is its accessibility. By being free, the governments and the Responsible Tourism Institute give the businesses a great asset and a precious help. Meetings, on-site visits, questionnaire and reports are required of the companies as the Biosphere is a serious commitment. Objectives have to be fulfilled and proofs added in the reports. However, whereas an ISO, which is an international set of standards that have to be fulfilled in one way, the Biosphere allows more flexibility.

In the case of this study for the hotel W Barcelona, the obtention of the Biosphere Agreement is going to be a decisive tool for their sustainable management. It is to note that the Biosphere Agreement was put in place in Barcelona city early 2019, and that the W Barcelona was one of the first hotel to sign its inscription. The acquisition process is still running, with for deadline the 31th December, with objectives that involved all the operational process of the W, including lot of administrative backups. Therefore, the Biosphere implementation will be detailed below in the Discussions part.

#### **4.2.2. LOGISTICS**

##### **PRODUCTION**

As a hotel, the W Barcelona is not producing goods as way of talking, as it mainly provides Services to its guests. However, to comply with the guests' wants and needs, they deliver products or services such as Food and Beverage offers, amenities in the rooms, cleaning of the public and private spaces, etc. Those productions use resources that have to be managed via a system of trash and garbage disposal. The objective of implementing sustainability through the Production process is to reduce the CO2 emissions, and more globally, diminishing their whole environmental footprint.

##### ***ENERGY AND WATER CONSUMPTION***

The hotel W Barcelona was built ten years ago and was not conceived to be a building involving lots of sustainable implementations. However, the W Barcelona, since Starwood's last years and even more since Marriott's acquisition, is beginning to improve its operational process.

Amongst the implementations that have for objectives to reduce the energetic consumptions and the CO2 emissions installed in the hotel, there is the installation of the solar panels which provide 4% of the hotel's consumed energy and the lighting control sensors set up in most of the public spaces, reducing the electricity consumption. Currently they are changing all their lights by LEDs in all the public areas. In the kitchen, new eco-friendly glass washing machines that use the steam to re-heat were added to the CAPEX and installed early 2019, which are saving 15 liters of water per hour. For the bathrooms, low flow faucets have been installed and the sanitary efficiencies have been redesigned with a dual-flush control to reduce the water consumption. The hotel W has installed (2019) a sewage treatment plant to reuse the used water from the guests' bathrooms (it doesn't

include the wastewater from the toilets), to clean the back areas of the hotel. As the installation was recent, it is not functioning yet.

As a way more involved with the service, standards that promote the saving of natural resources were put in place with Starwood and are still applied nowadays. For example, during the cleaning a room, the housekeeper has to answer to specific requirements, such as flush the toilet only two times; the first time when they enter the room and the last time when they are done cleaning the whole room and bathroom. This standard helps diminish the use of water for the cleaning in a consequent way as the hotel is more than 360 rooms strong.

From a point of view more informatic, but nonetheless important, one main issue was detected within the W Barcelona; it represents around 200 employees working in offices all year long. When combining the departments of Finance, Sales, Catering Sales, B&F, and the others, the printing quantity is astronomical. So, first of all, the paper they are using in the whole hotel is the Steinbeis Purewhite, a 100% recycled paper, which received the Ecolabel European and the “Blauer Engel” (Blue Angel), which is the ecolabel of the German government since 1978. In a second hand, incentives are sent to the employees to reuse the paper already printed in one face, to not waste any. The last action seen was the automatic setting of all the printers to black & white. Except when required for a specific document, it is strongly recommended to not print in color.

### ***TRASH DISPOSAL & RECYCLING***

Behind all the products and material that the W Barcelona is using daily, there is the question of the trash and garbage’s disposal system. Thanks to the interviews, it was possible to know that the three main producers of trashes within the hotel are the departments of Style (Housekeeping), Maintenance and B&F (especially Stewarding), and this analysis will focus on them. The trash disposal and recycling system is managed by the Maintenance department, and more specifically by the director of the maintenance department.

Since the back entrance of the hotel, for suppliers and employees, it can be seen three main containers that separate the “banal”, “paperboard” and “plastic” garbage’s. The end of any trash of the hotel. Most of the time, it’s outsourced companies, which are employed by the W hotel, to come

to pick some wastes. Sometimes, the hotel perceives percentages in return on the profit they made by reselling the material. However, it is not the majority of cases.

It is to point out that one big external company is hired to manage most of the waste of the hotel; Corp CLD. They have a monthly planning and come to pick the paperboard, the plastic, the glass, the banal and organic, the 'fluorescent', the batteries and the used vegetable oil. Corp CLD is a company completely devoted to the protection of the environment by assuming a respectful activity and management of trashes "for the planet". With more than 85 years of experience, and more than 400 vehicles disposed in 16 centers all around Catalonia, this external company is an asset to the W hotel in term of waste disposal. Last point but not least, this company does have since 2010 the ISO 9001 (for the quality gestion) and the ISO 14001 (for the gestion of the good practice for the environment), then acquired in 2015 the EMAS certification that then, helped them to get the ISO 14064-1 (about the control of the carbon emission). Furthermore, this enterprise chooses to be completely transparent and all the information relative to the company can be find on their internet website (Corpclld, 2019). From their annual revenue to their Equality Plan, passing by their environmental and social commitment.

Some specific suppliers also come to pick the empty containers such as the juices and smoothies, as they recycle the plastic bottles, and some specific glass bottles, such as the water bottles; *Solan de Cabras* and *Cabreiroa*. Action that avoid the creation of new recipients.

For some more hazardous material, such as light bulbs, batteries and needles (spa material), different external companies came to pick those wastes, as they are classified as "hazardous" waste.

As another small gesture but which has an impact of the paper consumption and thus, on the paper waste, is the action to remove the paper towels from the employee's restrooms and replace it by high-powered hand dryers, resulting in saving 35 kilometers of paper per month.

By law and norms, for security reasons, it is forbidden to use glass material near the swimming pools or at the beach. To answer to this problematic without promoting the single-use plastic glasses, the hotel W choose to use washable toughened plastic glass. To limit also the usage of individual small mineral water bottles in those areas, they changed the supplier for "Agua en Caja Mejor" instead of *Solan de Cabras*. By serving their water in a container in carton, they are nowadays pioneer and some of the most sustainable company regarding the water in bottle. Indeed, 94% of the containers are made of renewable resources such as cardboard fiber. However, the main point to underline is that

this pack represents zero emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere as this company only uses renewable energy. Last point but not least; they reverse 10% of their revenue to “Plant for the Planet” which is a foundation that takes care of the reforestation (Aguajamejor.com, 2019). If those changes are effective near the water areas, it has been noticed that the rest of the hotel is using the mineral water served in plastic bottles. In majority, they used them for the department of Banquets, for the meeting rooms, but also as products from the mini bar within the guests’ rooms. Let’s notice that the standards want that each fridge gets two bottles of water. Considering that the hotel W has 540 rooms and suites, if counting only one fridge per room, it equals at 1080 plastic water bottles.

In the same optic, the plastic cups have been removed from any public area, putting at the disposition of the guest’s crystal glasses and sustainable take away coffee cups only. However, for the back of house, in the employees’ dining room for example, those plastic cups are the only container available to drink water, with the takeaway coffee cups.

The idea of a water dispenser “AquaViva”, especially for the department of Banquets, is currently in discussions. The goal would be to quit the individual plastic bottles and the large glass bottles from the meeting rooms to get a solution that doesn’t include that much waste and recycling management afterwards. Amongst the other assets that this solution could provide is the in-bound and out-bound saving logistics, economy of storage spaces and personalization of the service (by adding the W logo on the permanent washable bottles). The only opposite added value would be the cleaning and maintenance costs of those bottles, plus the purchasing prices, greater than the actual solution.

Because the hotel W Barcelona is a five stars hotel, it is impossible to eliminate the food waste, as the hotel’s Chef explained (Expert 6, p. 115). However, a good planning of the occupancy and type of events can really help to reduce the waste. The main objective in the kitchen is to not overproduce, while in the same time, be able to serve more food than the guests are actually expecting. The surplus of food that have not been out of the kitchen (to avoid potential contamination risks), is then packed and frozen. One time per month, the Catalan association “Nutrición sin Fronteras” came to pick up the surpluses of food in refrigerated trucks. Since the beginning of the year 2019, a total of 856.2 Kilos has been given away. However, the main objective is to reach the zero waste.

As an observation from the field experience and the on-site visit, the garbage and trash disposal, even if it seems well organized, has some failures. In most of the venues of the hotel, they do not have

enough backspaces to put three or four garbage's to sort the trashes. Therefore, a lot of crystal, plastic, paper and other material are mixed up in those areas.

The worst observation in this chapter is coming from the Style department (Housekeeping). Indeed, within the rooms, the guests have no option to sort their own trashes and have only one main garbage container (two with the one in the bathroom). The housekeepers have trolleys to clean the rooms, which disposes of only one garbage bag on the front. Therefore, recycling is not an option as the housekeepers will throw everything in the same bag; amenities bottles, plastics, paper, food, etc. and then throw everything in the container of "banal" waste.

#### ***UTILIZATION OF HAZARDOUS MATERIAL***

When speaking of hazardous material, it comes directly in mind to analyze the cleaning products that the hotel is using. For any cleaning maintenance products and material, the hotel W Barcelona is using the company Ecolab. This international enterprise is focused on delivering products and services such as healthcare manufacturing, commercial laundries, food and beverage processing manufacturing and transportations that serve efficiently the businesses without damaging the planet and its natural resources. Thanks also to their service offer, they deliver personal expertise to maximize the operational processes of companies and helping them to improve or reach their sustainable goals. Their whole business model is centered on sustainability and through their sustainability reports of 2018 (Ecolab.com, 2019), it can be seen that they put the accent of the 17 sustainable development goals developed by the United Nations, with a deeper commitment for the goal 6, "to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all". With year-to-date measures and goals, this company is able to calculate their impacts and act around them.

This paper took interest in this company for the cleaning products that they deliver to the hotel. From the product itself and its ingredients to its packaging and dispensing methods, Ecolab certifies quality and safety while minimizing their environmental footprint. For every product, they choose to submit it to both government and non-governmental organization in charge of delivering eco-certifications. In 2018, more than 200 Ecolab products were seen attribute an eco-certification (Es.ecolab.com, 2019), that prove their compliance with high environmental standards and best practices. Even their own suppliers have to answer to the global fundamental principles of human dignity; health, safety and respect of human rights, called the Ethical Sourcing Standards. Last but not least, this company

shows to be transparent by publishing their sustainable reports on their websites and are updated regularly.

The second hazardous material that was detected is the gel fuel for the chaffing's in Banquets. Another solution to replace those gels is currently under discussion with the Director of Banquets. However, with the summer activities and the next important group coming in the hotel in October, this problem was put aside for the moment.

## **TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS**

Within the Logistics, the main point analyzed is the transportation impacts, inbound (from the exterior to the hotel) and outbound (from the hotel to the exterior). Regarding the inbound transportation, it includes all the products and materials coming for the hotel building and for the hotel service, as seen in Production. Amongst those suppliers there are the food suppliers, which represent the main suppliers of the hotel when the beverage part is also included. The second main supplier is the outsourced company contracted for the laundry and the housekeeping. The third one is the one regarding the amenities of the room and from the spa. It is important to note that some suppliers are mandatory by Marriott International, working via procurement, and some, more local, can be selected independently of the hotel group. For example, the spa amenities can't be individually chosen, as those should remain the same in every hotel of the chain, as standards. However, there are more options regarding the food and beverage products.

### ***FOOD & BEVERAGE***

For the food and beverage products, the W hotel, due to the implication of Marriott International in the whole operation and infrastructure of the hotel, has to follow the "global procurement supplier conduct guidelines" of Marriott when contracting a new supplier, as seen in the Firm's Infrastructure. However, more internally, the hotel W, through the purchasing department, is trying to regular their deliveries by time and by quantity. For the food and beverages, dates and quantities have to be respected by the managers when ordering products. For example, the order of material such as wooden cutlery or paper towels has to be done before the Tuesdays to be received for the following week. Quantity is especially required for the food items, like for example, the smallest amount of lime that can be order is of one kilo. In that way, the purchasing department is avoiding small orders and therefore, is reducing the frequencies of the deliveries, thus, the transportations

emissions. Some more local suppliers, such as some fruit and vegetables, are very close and might do more deliveries during the week in case of the pop-up of a special event.

While studying the food products, it is important to point out that all those suppliers are primary chosen to be local and the closest of the kilometer zero. Spain, and especially Catalonia is renowned for its lands and agriculture and can be proud to offer a wide variety of fruits and vegetables that the hotel W is enjoying, while making working the local farmers and businesses. The ultimate goal for the W Barcelona is to diminish the transportation and thus, the decrease in the products' quality (Expert 9, p. 132).

### ***OUTSOURCED HOUSEKEEPING LAUNDRY***

The second and other significant supplier is the external company that takes care of the laundry; Elis. They are in charge of all the laundry of the hotel, which means all the bed linens, and bathrooms supplies for the Style department, but also all the tablecloths and napkins required in all the venues of B&F. The only exceptions are for the employees' uniforms and for the guest's clothes, which are cleaned within the hotel.

Elis is an international multi-service company that provide cleaning services as well as some hygiene products, located in 28 countries. For the case of the hotel W Barcelona, Elis is coming one time per day, but might come more than once if an emergency requires it. Their footprint on the planet is not negligible due to their activities and their using of natural resources. However, Elis are following a strict sustainability program with measures and objectives based on the Triple Bottom Line. Their two main objectives are to reduce of 25% their consumption of water, energy and detergent products and to tend to zero waste. They have also a strong social commitment to their suppliers, customers and towards the communities where they implement themselves. Moreover, Elis choose to be transparent by publishing their report on sustainability through their websites and they are available in multiple languages (Corporate-elis.com, 2019). Regarding their transportations system, they claim having an Elis center at a maximum distance of 50km from any of their customers and plan rigorous delivery circuit to minimize their transportations. Also, they are working on alternative energy vehicle for their deliveries.

### ***AMENITIES***

The last main suppliers taken in account when evaluating the sustainability of the W Barcelona is the one of the amenities that the hotel W is offering. It is something that have its importance because



it's straight in the sight and use of the guest. The hotel W represents 473 rooms and 67 suites, which means an equivalent of more than 1 000 amenities distributed in the whole hotel in a single day. The consumption of those good is tremendous and so is the emissions CO<sub>2</sub> that goes with it, whether it is for the confection, the transportation or the disposal once used.

Comfort Zone is an Italian brand, and their transportations' emissions due to the international deliveries can't be avoided. However, this company follows a Greenhouse Gas Protocol for its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Under the first scope, it can be found their direct emissions, mainly generated by the combustion processes and the company vehicle fleet. It can also be seen that they have reach their objective of 66,7% of increase of hybrid, plug-in hybrid and electric company cars, minimizing considerably their environmental impacts concerning their transportation responsibility (Comfortzone.com, 2016).

#### **4.2.3. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

As sustainability is indissociable with the human factor, this study chose to put the management of the external guests in the same chapter as the internal ones. With the working conditions and the labor issues covered in this part, the internal guest attracts more attention in this study. Obviously, the involvement of the external guest is not forsaken.

##### **EXTERNAL GUEST**

When the communication with the external guest at W Barcelona is analyzed, the researcher has been forced to notice that the hotel W do not turn their marketing towards their sustainability practices. Not at all actually when putting aside Marriott and considering only the W brand. Concerning the after-sale service, and by focusing on the customer engagement, the guests of the W hotel are given a survey called the GSS (Guest Satisfaction Survey) at the end of their stay to evaluate their experience. Sadly, it is to point out that none actions are undertaken to do a follow up of their guests' opinion about sustainability while they do have a strong communication with their guests.

The external guests of the W Barcelona do have at their disposition some communication and possible actions regarding the sustainability of the hotel. The main one is the "Make a green choice" program available when checking-in at the hotel. The guest agrees that his bedsheets and amenities won't be

changed every day, but more on a three-days basis. A “freshen up” of the room still occurs. During this cleaning time, which is divided by two, the housekeeper only remakes the bed, arranges the decoration and clean the sink, toilet and shower. If the guest leaves his towels on the floor, that would mean to change it. This program is available for all the guests staying at the hotel. However, by opting for this program and if he is a Marriott Bonvoy member, the guest will get 200 Bonvoy points additionally.

As for another choice available to them, they can choose a green transportation service with the Concierge when going somewhere, for example e-bikes, e-taxis or e-bicycles.

Regarding the groups that booked events through Banquets, they have the option to change the individual plastic water bottles for the water in bricks, like the one they have near the pools and on the beach, for an additional fee of 1 euro per bottle.

### **INTERNAL GUEST**

The internal guest is really important for Marriott and its vision and values, as well as it is for W Hotels -and as it should be for any business-. That’s why recruiting them and training them is a long process but nonetheless important. This part will talk about the recruitment and the trainings as well as the tools provided by Marriott International to apply good practices, the compensation and benefits and the customer engagement and retention.

The research made for this part relies on the “Equality Plan” of the W Barcelona and the database of Marriott International corporate website.

Since the beginning, since the hiring process, the W hotel answers strict policies forcing the respect of human values and good practices. Marriott International provided guidelines for the Human Resources departments such as “Diversity & Inclusion” and “Guarantee of Fair Treatment”. The W hotel has signed and published their new “Equality Plan” the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2019. It stipulates ten main points, all in respect of fair Human Resources practices.

1. Access to the company
2. Hiring process
3. Promotion
4. Training
5. Retribution
6. Work health

7. Communication and sensibilization
8. Conciliation
9. Gender violence
10. Sexual harassment

This Equality Plan was created with the active participation of the internal committee and the executive board of the company as a measure born from the Organic Law 3/2007 of March 22th, for the Equality of women and men in the workplace environment, without any discrimination of any sort. The first one was signed the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and renewed this year, updated with new social goals. It has for objective to be rewrite in four years. During this time, semesterly meetings will take place to keep an open dialogue with the employees represents and the committee.

It reports that 43% of the employees of W Barcelona are women and 57% are men, giving a parity in the staff according to the Ley of Equality effective between women and men. Moreover, women are now occupying 52% of positions in the Executive Committee of the hotel.

Moreover, the hotel W Barcelona has developed long-term relationship with schools and universities, local and international. Through an active participation, with visits, presentations and group works, the hotel W ensures itself a contact base for future employees through a win-win exchange, as they are sharing their knowledge and experience with future professionals.

In addition to good hiring practices, trainings and formations are offered to the employees, to make them more efficient. Since their first week, all employees have to participate in one- or two-days formation; the Induction days. During those days, the new employees are driven through the hotel standards and polices to follow such as the hygiene and grooming rules, the security standards to follow in case of incidents and are giving all the documents necessary to learn the hotel's philosophy and functioning.

Through the corporate website of Marriott, employee can find their employee's file and a performance management tool. Two training tools are also at the free disposition of any employee via the Marriott's Platform; myLearning and the Digital Learning Platform. On those two platforms, employees can find all sort of trainings, going by language classes to manual courses such as the manual of the brands, how to use Opera or any other management tools. More than 500 classes are offered. Some are also

mandatory by the brand or by the headquarters of Marriott, such as the training about how to react with Sexual Harassment (one of the social sustainable goals of Marriott to form and train all of its employees by 2020 on sexual harassment prevention, and also an objective of the Equality Plan of the hotel W), or even learning the Marriott BonVoy guest fidelity program and its points system. Those classes are followed up by the manager of the employee and by the Human Resources department of each hotel.

For the compensations and benefits, the employees of the W hotel seen themselves granted discounts in all the hotel of the chain. It results in preferential rates when booking a hotel, or direct discounts in most of the bars and restaurants of the Marriott's hotels, sometimes up to 40% off. This benefit is called "Explore – Associate Discounts".

However, one of the main benefits related to work in W Barcelona is again, related to Marriott International and its strength. Marriott Careers is an international internet platform that connect all the hotels of the group and put the job offer at the disposition of its employees first. It creates opportunities to raise within the company faster than anywhere else. Let's remind that Marriott International is the biggest hotel group in the world, involving no less than 6,500 hotels around the world.

Another important part that directly involves the wellbeing and thus, the retention of the talents (employees), is the Take Care team. When the management was still under Starwood, a similar group was called the Wish team. Now, the Take Care team of the hotel W Barcelona is led by the Human Resources Director. The missions of that team are priority turn around the customer engagement. This group is individual of any hotel, and any employee of the hotel can volunteer to participate in that team. The objective of this group is to create and organize events or activities dedicated to the employees of the hotel, such as sport sessions and tournaments or staff parties.

During the field experience, the researcher could be a part of that team and participate of some of the meetings. During those, they brainstormed on the summer staff party which would also be the 10<sup>th</sup> years birthday of the hotel. They talked of the partnership with a local café which offered a discount during a month to get a breakfast and a yoga class, accessible to all employees of the W by showing the employees' cards. They also started to organize the volleyball tournament which took place during July.

Every three months, the hotel organized also the “Get Together”. A meeting which try to reunite as many employees as possible and where the General Manager does a speech. The objective of those meetings is to share the results of the hotel with the employees and explain what the next objectives are. Prizes are also awarded to five employees; the best manager and the best talent from the back of the house, the best manager and the best talent from the front of the house, and the best trainee. Prizes come under the form of an additional money on the next salary and recognition. The objective is to keep the employees motivated and let them know that the hotel cares and knows who they are.

However, even if the W Barcelona respects fair employment practices, offers good compensation and benefits, it wasn’t possible to detect any special practice regarding any sustainable training for the employees. Some messages and incentives are shared with the Talents, as seen during the Operations part, but there is no real following. All the events organized for the employees by the Business Council, the Junior Business Council or even the Serve 360° council involved the participation of the employees, but few are designed individually for the W Barcelona.

### 4.3. SURVEY ANALYSIS

A quantitative research was made additionally to the qualitative analysis, taking the form of a survey (Annex 19 & 20), to overcome the deficiencies of the main method. The objectives of this survey are first, to underline the involvement and the commitment of the employees to the sustainability. To detect if the employees are motivated and willing to change their way of working in a more sustainable way, and thus, to support the hotel in case of big changes through the value chain. The second objective is to analyze the internal communication with the employees and detect the loopholes, which will allow the researcher to identify issues and improvements.

This survey was priority tested on a sample of employees and approved by the Human Resources department of the hotel W Barcelona before being send via the Talents' professionals' email addresses. For some front-line employees which doesn't have access to an email account, the survey was shared via WhatsApp by the managers and a computer was available at disposition in the Human Resources office. The survey was accessible for two weeks. However, the one hundred answers were received in nine days only.

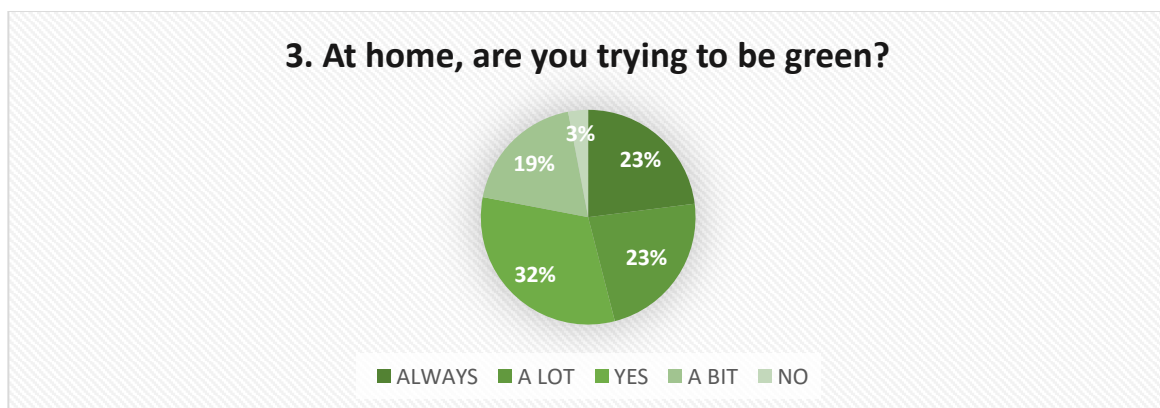
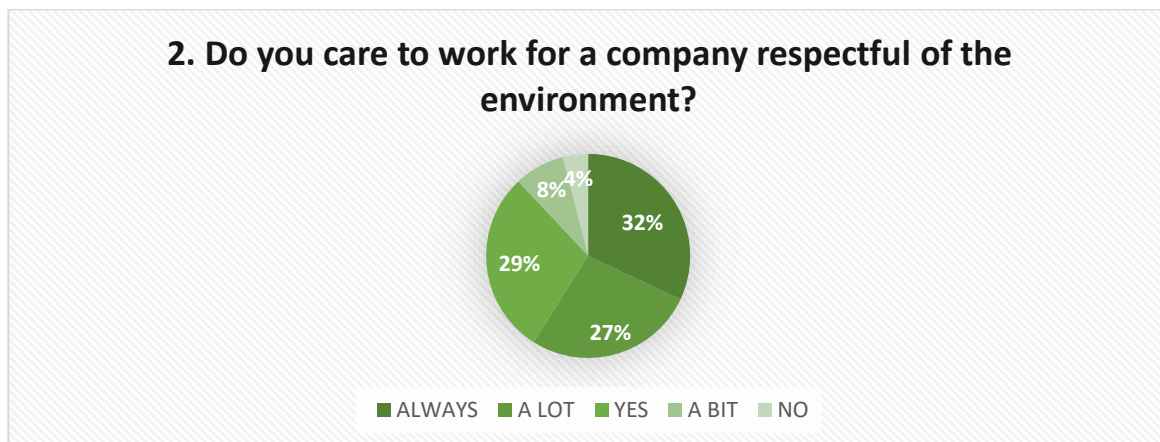
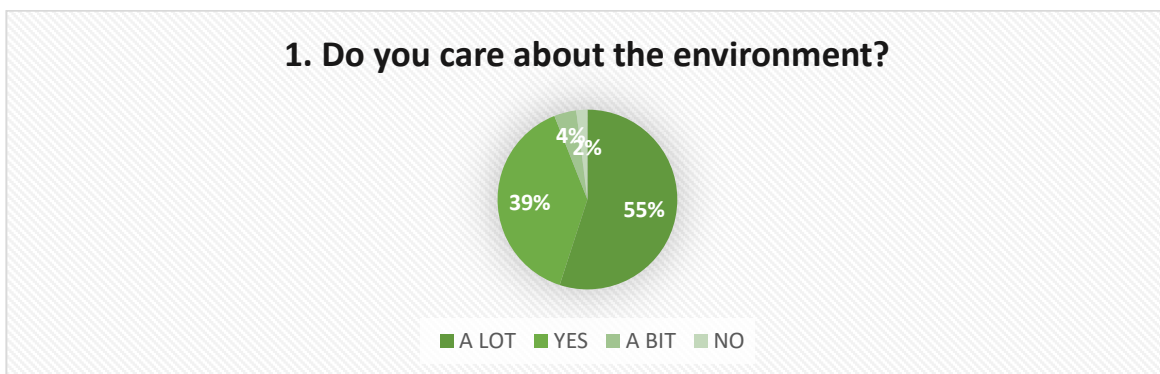
In total, one hundred answers were received and analyzed. Almost all departments were represented with 26,80% coming from the management and 73,20% from the employees.

|                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| B&F: 30 participants               | Housekeeping: 4 participants    |
| Whatever/Whenever: 8 participants  | Security: 1 participant         |
| Marketing & Sales: 12 participants | Maintenance: 2 participants     |
| Kitchen: 9 participants            | Finance: 1 participant          |
| Human Resources: 5 participants    | Meetings Insider: 1 participant |
| Front Office: 6 participants       | Head Management: 3 participants |
| Spa: 3 participants                | No answers: 15                  |

This large sample really represents the broad spectrum of the W Barcelona's employees and allows a wider and 'fair' sample of point of views.

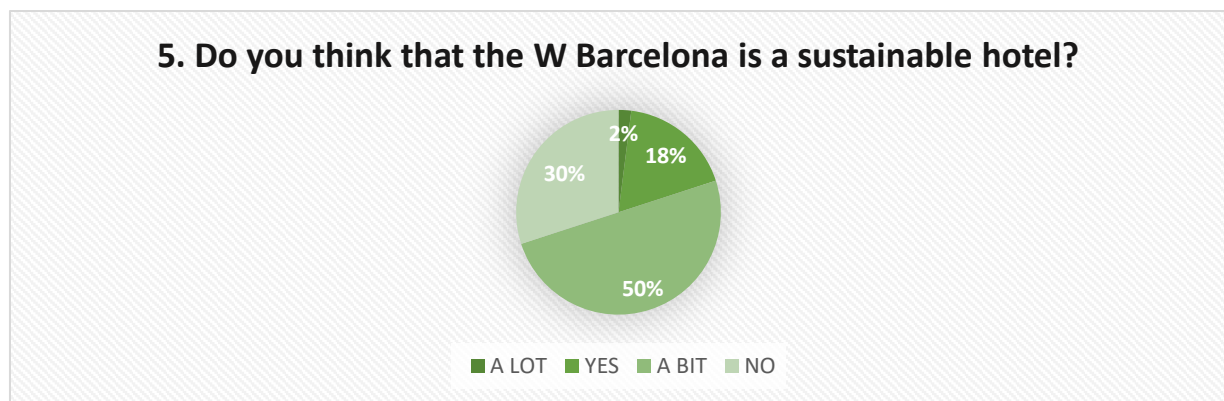
For the analysis of this survey, the answers were regrouped ('always', 'a lot', 'yes', 'a bit' and 'no') in two main groups; the positive answers (from 'always' to 'yes') and the negative answers (from 'a bit' to 'no') in order to have a more basic, but clearer view of the employees' opinions.

For the first part (questions 1 to 4), results show that the W hotel's employees have a strong interest in sustainability with 94% saying to care about the environment and 88% who say that they prefer to work for a sustainable company. 78% are already trying to be more green at home in their daily life's.



Those speaking numbers show that the hotel W is supported by its employees in case of any changes regarding the sustainability. Moreover, employees are expecting changes and ready to embrace them, which gives the hotel W Barcelona a solid strength and a strong internal support.

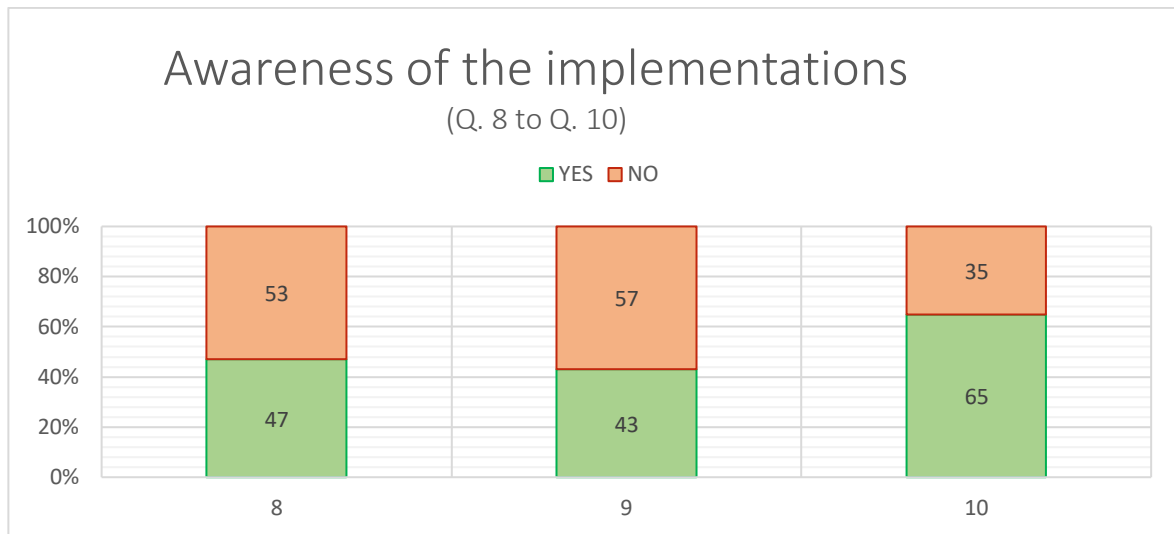
At the question 5, about the current state of the W hotel’s sustainability, 80% of the employees think that the hotel is not a sustainable hotel (50% a bit, 30% no).



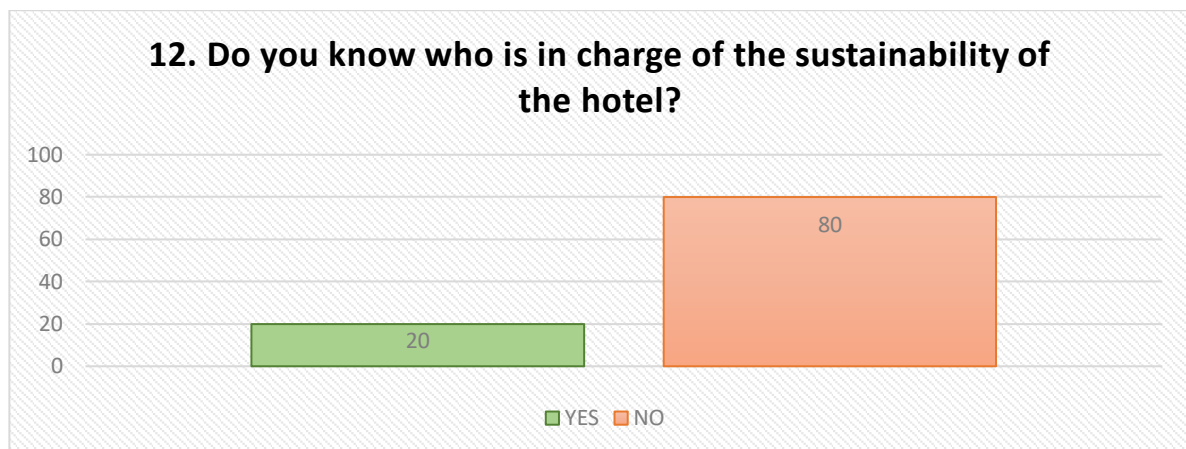
If the majority of the employees does not think that the hotel is sustainable, 68% are however capable of giving example of sustainable actions. When analyzing the answers provided for the question 6 (‘Why?’), a lot of small and vague actions are cited, with only 37 answers. Still, it is to notice that 32% of the employees are not able to give any examples of actions undertaken by the hotel to be more sustainable.

To put in highlight those numbers, the next three questions (questions 8 to 10) were designed to evaluate the level of internal communication with the talents about those sustainable actions and the results are really divided. To the question about giving food to an association (question 8), more than the half of the employees didn’t know it with 53% of ‘no’. To the question 9 about the implementation of LEDs lights to replace the actual ones, 57% said to not know it. The only question with a majority of ‘yes’ is the question 10, which concerns the biodegradable straws, with 65% of people knowing this fact.





Those numbers really express a lack of communication with the hotel's employees. But this can be understood with the results of the question 12; more than 80% of the employees doesn't know the person in charge of the sustainability.



And even in those 20% of 'yes', mistakes were made as the question 13 shows it. In truth, less than 20% of the respondents know who is in charge of the sustainability. When taking in account that almost 27% of the total answers are coming from the management, the results of this question show a real communication failure.

However, the end of the survey, with the questions 14 and 16, shows positivism. 98% of the respondents think that the hotel W Barcelona could be more eco-friendly by improving its operational process and 99% says that this is an important matter that should not be put aside.

Yet, some of the open answers show a real preoccupation for the environment and the society in general (i.e.; *“There is no planet B”, “For our future”, “It’s one step towards saving our mother earth”, “Por que estamos a 50 metros del Mediterraneo y temenos que ser mas concientes sobre los desechos que generamos. Los productos como los amenities no son biodegradables y generamos demaciado plastic y despilfarro de agua”* which means *“Because we are at 50 meters of the Mediterranean sea and we have to be more conscious about the waste we generate. Products such as amenities are not biodegradable and we generate too much plastic and wastewater.”*), some express a clear vision of the state of sustainability and the role that the big companies have (i.e.; *“Las empresas grandes tienen una gran responsabilidad. Un hotel genera muchísimos residuos diariamente, por lo que debe preocuparse mucho por la sostenibilidad”* which says *“Large companies have a great responsibility. A hotel generates a lot of waste daily, so it should worry a lot about sustainability.”*), *“Por el medioambiente. Además, muchos grupos y eventos nos solicitan a menudo a saber qué acciones tomamos o si somos Green. Cada vez es mas importante para las empresas colaborar con otras que también realizan acciones de sostenibilidad”* which means *“For the environment. In addition, many groups and events often ask us to know what actions we do or if we are Green. It is increasingly important for companies to collaborate with others that also carry out sustainable actions.”*), and others claim that sustainability is a trend and the change is more marketing (i.e.; *“It’s trendy. The hotel will attract much more people”, “We represent a Brand focused on trends. The sustainability is one of the most important objectives for the new generations, so we must be proactive”*).

#### 4.4. ACQUISITION OF THE BIOSPHERE RECOGNITION

##### 4.4.1. PROCESS

The city of Barcelona is one of the first city to offer this sustainable program for touristic businesses. It all starts beginning of 2019. As seen during the firm infrastructure, the hotel W Barcelona is currently in process for the obtention of the Biosphere Recognition. It is important for the W hotel, as a business, as this tool will help them to improve their whole value chain. But it is also important for Marriott International, as the Biosphere Certificate is priory made around the 17 Sustainable Development Goals put in place by the United Nations, the same support on which Marriott relies on for his 'Serve 360°' program.

To obtain the Biosphere Recognition, the hotel W has a series of step to follow. After the adhesion, the hotel should pick a representant(s) to assume the role of intermediary between the Chamber of Commerce of Barcelona, in charge of delivering the certification, and the management of the hotel. In the case of the studied hotel, it is the Director of Operations and also the person in charge of the sustainability of the hotel with the help of the Spa Director.

There was a first meeting called 'Collective Formation 1' during when they explained the Biosphere definition, role, implications, guidelines and requirements during approximately four hours. A couple of months later, followed the second formation, in which they developed this time the objectives and requirements expected from the companies. Priory, participants had received documents online and a questionnaire to fill. This second meeting of four hours was focused on presenting and explaining each question to answer any doubts. Because, to answer those questions, the participant has to add a 'proof' that justify his answer. For example, for the question about the responsible purchasing policies (1.2), the hotel should add as an evidence the "Global Procurement Supplier Conduct Guidelines" of Marriott International amongst others examples.

For the W Barcelona, this questionnaire contains 92 requirements, as the hotel has more than 50 employees. For every point, the hotel has to provide a proof that can attest its answers as seen above. Those proves can be in any form tough; screenshots, contracts, guidelines, photos, reports, etc. However, in those 92 requirements, 53 are obligatory and 39 optional. To get the Biosphere

recognition, the hotel W Barcelona has to fill the questionnaire by the end of December 2019. That's why for this first year of implementation, the hotel W choose to focus only on the 53 mandatory points. Obviously, optional requirements that the hotel is already fulfilling are added as well.

Those questions are divided in seven chapters;

1. Economic growth and social inclusion
2. Fair work and gender equality
3. Efficient resources, environmental protection and climate change
4. Culture, diversity and heritage
5. Responsible communication and marketing
6. Commitments, policies and tools
7. Good practices specific to the activity

During the whole process, the Biosphere adhesion manual provides a definition of each of the requirements, the sustainable goals where they came from and examples.

After those two meetings, a consultant, specialist on sustainability is assigned to each participant. A visit was planned, and the consultant came for a personalized session, the '*assessment 1*', the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019. During those four hours, he sat with the persons in charge of the Biosphere acquisition and help the hotel to fill the questionnaire and to detect three main objectives for 2019. For the hotel W Barcelona, those three goals are the installation of dispenser in the guests' rooms, the reduction of printing (especially the Warm Up; the daily paper that informs the employees of all the events going on that day, the percentage of occupancy, the phone number of the managers on-duty and more specific information that the employee might need during his day) and the implementation of recycling spots in all the departments.

The hotel is already undertaking a lot of actions required by the Biosphere. However, as there is no Corporate Social Responsibility in the W Barcelona, the information is hard to gather. After this meeting, the Biosphere's consultant recommended a reunion involving the different concerned persons to get documents; especially the Human Resources department, the Maintenance department, the Purchasing department and the Marketing department.

#### **4.4.2. POSITIONING**

Let's take a deeper look on the actual position of the hotel W Barcelona on the fifty obligatory questions from the Adhesion manual (Annex 22). It can be seen two forms of action to undertake; the ones that are already implemented but can still be improved and the ones that are not yet carried out, where the efforts should be turn towards on first and foremost.

##### ***ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL INCLUSION***

For the first part about the economic growth and the social inclusion and its four mandatory requirements, the hotel W answers positively to all, especially about the social inclusion and the purchasing policies (q. 1.1, q. 1.2). As seen with the active participation of the Junior Business Council and the Take Care team, the hotel W is collaborating with associations and groups, which promote the social and economic development of the city. For example, it can be state the monthly food donations to "Nutricio sin Frontera", the "Pedaleja x la Marató" benefit event, the blood bank donation or even the partnership with local schools, amongst other associations. For the purchasing policies, the "Global Procurement Supplier Conduct Guidelines" imposed by Marriott International is a real asset. Evidently, smaller individual actions that do not require a change in the brand can still be studied for continuous improvements.

However, for the two last questions about the economic viability and the perception of the customer (q. 1.3 and q. 1.4), actions really focused on sustainability are still missing. The hotel does have tools for the operative administration, with indicators of economic-financial management, as well as a system to monitor the guest satisfaction and oversee their complains and recommendations (the Guest Satisfaction Survey). Yet, nothing that concerns the sustainability is implemented in those tools and thus, can be improved.

##### ***FAIR WORK AND GENDER EQUALITY***

Thanks to the headquarters of Marriott International, which follow a strong social ethic, and thanks to the active participation of the employees' committee, working in pair with the executive council and the Human Resources department, all the questions about the internal organization, work conciliation, gender equality are well respected. In relation to the questions 2.1 and 2.4, which concern respectively the planning of the Laboral schedule and actions aiming at achieving a better conciliation with the work, the family and the personal life of the employees, answers and policies can be found in

the Equality Plan of the W Barcelona under the section “Improve legal measures to facilitate the reconciliation of the personal, family and work life of the workforce”. No less than twelve actions are undertaken for and around this theme. For the questions 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 regarding the Gender Equality, additionally to the standards and guidelines from the Equality Plan, trainings and formations are also obligatory for all the employees about how to react to sexual harassment for example. The hotel W is also following a strict protocol regarding the harassment situations, whether they involve the external guest or the internal ones. As seen earlier, the hotel also possesses a committee focus on the rights of the employees within the company. It takes care of the work health amongst other things, followed by a strong communication with the executive board of the hotel and the employees representants. This answers to the requirements 2.10, 2.11, 2.12 and 2.13.

Improvements can still be done about the communication. For the question 2.2 and 2.3 which concerns the formation of the personal about the corporate culture, and therefore about the sustainability, it doesn't exist anything yet. The hotel has a ‘Welcome guide’ delivered to every new employee. The objective to fill this requirement would be to add a chapter about the sustainable and responsible tourism within the manual, in order for the employees to be more aware about the hotel's good practices and about the internal philosophy as well. Same, other improvements can be found regarding the point 2.8, which talk about the participation and the involvement of trainees within the hotel. The W Barcelona should meet the objective of 8% of trainees annually. However, presently, they are exceeding it. In addition to fix objective and to try to diminish the quotas, it would be best to add the ratio of the trainees that are then contracted.

#### ***EFFICIENT RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE***

For the first requirement of this section (3.1), which concerns the energetic control, the hotel W should add as evidence all the implementations cited during the previous analysis. The zones with LEDs, the presence detectors, the solar panels. But also, the type of isolation the building possesses (windows) and proves of good practices such as turning off the light of an empty space. For the second requirement on the water control (3.2), the hotel should do the same and add pictures of all the implementations that have for objective to safeguard the natural resources. For example, the dual-control flush for the toilets or the treatment plant that will reuse the grey water to clean back storage spaces.

For the three questions that concern the waste control, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5, the hotel does the legal requirements and a bit more but can largely improve. The W Barcelona meets the requirements of waste storage and perform a correct segregation of its trashes, delivering them to authorized entities. However, more recycling could be implemented in many different areas. Also, although the hotel W is trying to prevent the waste generated by its activities, like the suppression of the plastic spoons and the plastic straws, plastic bottles and plastic cups are still seen in quantity within the hotel.

Regarding the pollution visual and auditive emitted by the hotel W (3.6 and 3.7), researches have to be done and protocols created. And concerning the last two points, the 3.8 and the 3.9, about the communication with both the internal and the external guests apropos of the good practices available to them in order to have an efficient use of resources and to minimize the environmental impacts, very few is done actually. With the external guest, he has the “Make a green choice” program and few communications with the employees.

#### ***CULTURE, DIVERSITY AND HERITAGE***

As the hotel W Barcelona has very few means of communication about their own sustainability, they do have improvements to make in this chapter. It concerns exclusively sharing the knowledge and raise the awareness to the guests of the hotel. For this purpose, the hotel could include in its dialogue with its guests, messages about the responsible tourism (flyer, web). It could also create a document for the Concierge/Reception of interesting areas of Barcelona which are not yet saturated. It is without forgetting announces that include touristic attractions accessible to people with disabilities. For the part more internal, in the ‘Welcome guide’ given to all the employees, the hotel could add the following; sustainability policy, good environmental practices and/or highlights of the sustainability of the hotel. In the ‘Warm up’ printed every day, sustainable incentives could be added as well.

#### ***RESPONSIBLE COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING***

The requirement that is already fulfilled in this section is the 5.3, regarding the promotion of good health practices with the guest and with the employees. As said in their mission, vision and values, the W hotel really put the accent on the sport and therefore promote it. At a smaller scale, health incentives and sports classes are offered by the hotel for its employees through the Take Care team. The question 5.5 asks if the hotel is using sustainable means of communication. On this point,

the hotel is doing great efforts. The paper is 100% recycled, incentives are made and in majority respected, to print on the two sides, the mail are not printed when possible and avoiding to plasticized paper.

The first requirement of this chapter concerns the responsible marketing (5.1), it calls for a truthful, clear and accurate information about the services provided by the hotel W, and about the organization itself. For this point, transparency is the key as it has been seen during the Literature Review and the analysis.

The question 5.2, which concerns a positive communication about the sustainability and its benefits, send back to the document that has to be created for the previous part. As no document of this type exists yet, this point is to improve. That's also the case for the question 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8, which respectively talk about the promotion of local products, the communication of a Sustainable Policy and the global communication about the sustainability to its guests.

### ***COMMITMENTS, POLICIES AND TOOLS***

The first point of this section is about the Organizational Culture (6.1) and is one of the biggest changes required of the W Barcelona. Because it implies to include in the mission, vision and values of the hotel, elements of sustainability, whether it is social, environmental or economic. The major problem is due to the fact that the W Barcelona is part of a brand and of a group. An individual change that involve the culture of the business is not possible. If the mission, vision and values of the hotel had to be changed, it would require a transformation in the whole brand, internationally. However, for this point, the hotel W Barcelona has as a solution, to add it in their philosophy and share it through all the documents that he is sharing.

The requirement 6.3 is about the Action plan of three improvements imposed by the Biosphere. In the case of the hotel W Barcelona, those three goals are the installation of dispenser in the guests' rooms, the reduction of Warmup printing and the implementation of recycling spots in all the departments. One of the main objectives, also reachable, is the designation of a responsible of the sustainability and the creation of a committee that could help this person by reuniting all the information and recommendations.



As the hotel W Barcelona hasn't for now any form of controlled sustainability, especially about the Production part, the hotel should select or create indicators to calculate and evaluate the main parameters of sustainability.

### ***GOOD PRACTICES SPECIFIC TO THE ACTIVITY***

The first point of this chapter is about the implementation of mechanisms to facilitate the energy saving means for the guests (7.1). Yet, as seen in the chapters of the efficient resources and responsible communication, except the "Make a green choice" program, the guest doesn't know and can't act in consequence.

The questions 7.2 is focused on the oils and greases separators that prevent the discharge of oil residues, so that they can be reused. To add a photo of the fryers is the first step to compel with this standard. Question 7.3 asks about the ecological treatment applied during the washing of all clothing and textile. For this point, the hotel W is outsourcing all of its laundry, except the employees' uniforms, with Elis. During the analysis of the suppliers and during the transportations impacts, it has been seen that Elis is a sustainable company which is trying to involve sustainability in all their activities. Even for the internal laundry, the products used are coming from Ecolab, a sustainable brand as well.

The requirement 7.4 is about the small portion/packaging and its use in the hotel. And it can be seen a lot. From the breakfasts via the Actimels, the yogurts, the fruit juice, to the In-room dining which offers all the chocolates bars and candies in individual plastic portions. Improvement can largely be done in that area.

For the questions 7.5 and 7.7, which concern the communication with the guests about the local gastronomic spots for example, this send back again to the document that the hotel W is missing. Some further information could also be asked to the B&F Director and its team for more precision.

Additionally, the hotel W has other information to highlight for the end of 2019. To elect a delegate of risk prevention, the establishment of accessible data for everyone, create a new politic of tourism responsible and put in place an effective communication about the good environmental practice of the company. At best, the company is required to incorporate in his mission, vision and values, fundamental principles of sustainability.

When the questionnaire will be filled, a second advising session will take place; the verification of the individualized improvement at the headquarters of the entity. During approximately one hour, the consultant with the hotel's representants will revise each of the question. Then the case of the W Barcelona will be sent for study by the Biosphere Committee and the Responsible Tourism Institute in charge of delivering the recognition.

When the hotel will earn the Biosphere Agreement for 2020, the work won't be over. New objectives and requirements will be set, for continuous improvements within the value chain.

## 5. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1. STRATEGIC EVALUATION

#### 5.1.1. FIRM INFRASTRUCTURE

The W hotels are renowned for their quirky philosophy and for their unique business model which makes them stand out from their competitors and attract another segment of guests. However, their actual positioning regarding the sustainability is far from being a strength. Three main strategic observations were detected during the evaluation of the firm infrastructure. By strategic observations, this paper means that the results found were analyzed in the previous part, allowing a more precise view of the positive and the negative strengths that the hotel W could rely on or on the contrary, improve. The involvement of Marriott International, the absence of Corporate Social Responsibility representant in the W Barcelona and the acquisition of the Biosphere.

#### ***MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL***

The first main point flowing from the analysis of the firm infrastructure of the W Barcelona is clearly the involvement of Marriott International. As seen during the company's analysis, Marriott International is not a hotel owner, but an operating company, hired to manage properties owned by a third party. The acquisition of Starwood by Marriott International had consequences on the whole management system of the W Barcelona. As a franchise hotel, the W Barcelona has to answer to rules, standards and guidelines imposed by the group's headquarters.

When focusing on the sustainability of the hotel, the support of Marriott International is an asset and a strength for the hotel W. Indeed, with its new sustainability program called "Serve 360° - Doing good in every direction", Marriott is able to share its knowledge, experience and support with its franchised hotels. Support that can take the form of suppliers' contracts, standards or even shared guidelines. The W hotel is also enjoying the sustainable agenda that Marriott CSR team have created, helping them to reach goals more easily. By reuniting the strengths of each of its hotels, Marriott International created Councils by region in charge of the implementing sustainability within their hotels, but also creating a positive impact on the communities where they choose to do business; the Business Council, the Junior Business Council and the Serve 360° meetings.

Yet, one dark cloud appears when it comes to the clarity of all those different councils. People who are not really involved tend to be confused and do not understand the differences and the goals for each one, as confirmed the expert 7, the General Manager of Renaissance hotel and in charge of the Serve 360 meetings (Expert 7, p. 120), and the Expert 2, member of the Junior Business Council (Annex 8, p.95). The communication is also not clear for the employees. Sometimes, they do not even know that those councils exist, and especially the important role they have in the sustainability of the hotel W Barcelona. During the field experience, and the researcher's participation in those meetings, it was possible to witness for example the superposition of events and organizers. The World Clean Up day of 2019 was first organized by the W hotel exclusively. However, in the same time, the hotel Arts of Barcelona also organized a clean-up walk via the Serve 360 meetings. After a while, the event was finally organized by the Junior Business Council. However, it is to point out that the results of this event were not as high as it could have been, due to the lack of time for the organization and the poor communication around it.

Even if the Business councils, the Junior Business councils and the Serve 360° meetings created miss sometimes communication, they are still strong allies for the W Barcelona. They allow the hotel W to access to knowledge, experiences and a wider participation in lots of events and sustainable actions. Thanks to the Procurement, the hotel also disposes of preferred pricing when it concerns new products, or new contracts with suppliers. Also, the set of guidelines for suppliers imposed by the group's headquarters really help the hotel maintaining good practices. Moreover, as seen for the Biosphere obtention, and following the principle of Shared Value, the participation and the respect of sustainable practices regarding suppliers and delivery is mandatory for a positive impact on communities.

As another important tools that the hotel W Barcelona gets from Marriott International are the informatic tools that support their infrastructure. The Just Report tool on the mgs platform of Marriott allows the headquarters to get very precise information that are then, used to publish reports and set new goals and objectives. By publishing their reports, Marriott is being transparent, providing a bit of his shining to the hotel W. However, the W hotel does not publish any document related to their sustainability, either on their website or shared with their clients. It is also worth remembering that several information and policies were found on the documentary evidence from the group corporate

website, hence, lower accessibility in the field, that could sometimes not be 100% designed for the hotel W Barcelona.

### ***ABSENCE OF CSR***

The second main observation about the firm infrastructure lies within the walls of the hotel W Barcelona. It doesn't exist a proper CSR department, or even a manager/director of sustainability. The survey's results even show that more than 80% of the employee's respondents don't know who is in charge of the sustainability within the hotel (question 12). It is the Director of Operations who takes this role as an additional charge. Himself admits that he needs help, and his absence to many councils is something that has been noticed during the analysis (Expert 1, p. 90). It is understandable that a director of such importance can't assume two functions at the same time. Yet, he can count on the strong support of some associates such as the Spa Director (Expert 3, p. 100) and the Housekeeping (Style) Director (Expert 4, p. 105). Notwithstanding, the interviewees all agreed that it represents a consequent amount of work and they do miss time.

During the Biosphere meeting with the consultant provided by the Barcelona City Council, this expert explained that for the Biosphere good following, each property should need a representant, someone who would be in charge of the sustainability within the hotel. His role would be to regroup all the different information that touches the economic, environmental and social participation of the hotel, but also to find new solutions, new suppliers and new ideas to always improve their value chain and involvement. He added that for a hotel the size of the W Barcelona, it would be even better to have a sort of internal council regrouping the heads of departments. At least the ones that are really involved, such as Maintenance, Purchasing, Human Resources amongst others, with of course, the head management to represent the final decision (Expert 11, p. 144).

### ***BIOSPHERE COMMITMENT***

The last strategic observation lies in the acquisition of the Biosphere Commitment. This intelligent sustainable management tool has requirements and objectives which will allow the hotel W Barcelona to improve their value chain on a long-term process and developing the principle of Shared Value. As they also rely on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, such as Marriott Serve 360°, the objectives are shared by the city, the community and also by the business' headquarters.

As seen during the first counselling session with the Biosphere consultant, the Expert 11, the hotel W is already meeting a lot of requirements imposed by the Biosphere Commitment, but also need deeper changes within its functioning.

Amongst the important measures for end of 2019 that fit with the results of this analysis is the creation of documents and evidences that will support the sustainable actions undertaken by the W Barcelona. Exercise a positive and truthful communication between the hotel and its guests, creating a politic of tourism responsible and incorporate sustainable in all the value chain.

All along the process, during the two first meetings and the consultant's private visit, it has to be noticed that the Director of Operations and one of the main representant of sustainability within the W hotel, wasn't able to come for the second meeting, and for the first private counseling session neither.

### **5.1.2. LOGISTICS**

#### ***ENERGETIC CONSUMPTION AND FOLLOWING***

The hotel W does hold reports on their energetic consumption, whether it is about the gas, the water or the electricity. They do a following every month and sum them every year. However, it couldn't be seen any form of following that concern the sustainability. Let's remind that the hotel W Barcelona is ten years old and as such, wasn't conceived with all the new technologies and eco-friendly material which are available nowadays. A regular maintenance of the building is done, but very few improvements have been realized towards a more conscious utilization of the natural resources. Yet, small changes can be seen such as the installation of LEDs in the building and lightning control sensors in the public spaces. The interview with the Director of Maintenance (Expert 12, p. 149), shows that the savings made with the LEDs lights for example could be calculated but it is not the case actually. As said before, there is no following regarding the sustainability energetic costs. In consequence, the savings realized cannot be reinvested for CSR improvements. What does represent the change for a better energetic consumption for the hotel W? It is a first step towards a sustainable value chain, a way for more profit or a conscious gesture?

When looking at the standards that concern the sustainability for the service, like the set-up of a room for a new client, it can be seen two types; the ones that maintain resources and the one that depletes them. The housekeeper must only flush the toilets two times while cleaning a room, which help diminishing the use of water. But in another hand, the TV and the air conditioning must be on before the delivery of the room for a new client. Between the cleaning, checking and lightning of those and the arrival of the guest, it can sometimes take hours of electricity functioning. As another remark, the hotel claims to have installed dual-flush toilet control. That's a good tool as it economizes water. Yet, when keeping looking in that room, the plastic is still the master of the place; amenities, water bottles, even the hotel's catalogue are printed and plasticized. Putting all those elements in the balance, and the results come out more negative than positive.

And not only in the rooms but also in the public space, discordances have been noticed. Standard rules but also the Biosphere Agreement stipulates that the temperature of the air conditioning should be set at 21°C during the winter and 26°C during the summer. The researcher's field experience shows that for the back offices, the air conditioning is often set lower and sometimes let working during all the night, although there is nobody in the office. Same happen for some lights. When entering a public space like a meeting room, it is not rare to find the air conditioning and the light on for no reasons. A more rigorous maintenance should be applied regarding those criteria.

It is true that, when looking back in the back of the house, efforts are made. For all the machineries, new appliance and engine are now selected more respectful of the environment and added to the CAPEX as an investment. The eco-friendly washing machines, the sewage treatment plant, are all new installations which attest the goodwill of the hotel to do better in its activities.

However, and as seen earlier, the absence of real control about the sustainability is felt. That's the case for the solar panels. As they are not functioning with photovoltaic plates but with thermal plates, their use is to warm water and not to store energy. However, it's been a long time that the solar panels are not in use for maintenance problems that never got fixed due to more urgent problems elsewhere, has admitted the Maintenance Director (Expert 12, p. 149). One maintenance engineer even said that the solar panels "are a joke" (Expert 8, p. 127).

### ***TRASH DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING***

The results of the analysis of the trash and garbage disposal do but little more than the legal compliance required of any business by the city of Barcelona. Three main containers which represent

the banal, the plastic and the carton are posted at the back entrance of the hotel and daily, external companies come to pick up the wastes.

The positive point is the active participation with outsourced companies in Barcelona. However, the hotel W Barcelona is paying companies that will after sell the products and get paid a second time. Some of them are given back a percentage to the hotel, but it's not the majority. But it's "easier" that way (Expert 12, p. 149). It could certainly be more feasible, for the hotel W, to get more return on their waste via more partnership with local associations as it will be developed below.

The main negative point about the sorting of the trash is the lack of attention. The two main departments that produce the most waste are the Style department (Housekeeping) and the Stewarding department. And for both of them, very few actions were detected for the recycling of the trashes. The housekeepers have one garbage bag on their trolley when cleaning the rooms which means that everything they find in the room and that need to be trashed is put in the same bag; plastic, glass, paper, food, etc. All those garbage bags end up in the same container. A simple and quite widespread system nowadays is to put a selector in the cleaning trolley that will have two or three bags. Like this, the housekeepers could at least sort the trashes, even lightly better. In the same optic, none option is given to the guest to sort their own garbage. A selective three containers garbage could replace the trash basket already in place.

In Banquets, the chafing's working with gel are thrown up in the regular garbage, with no preoccupation for the contamination of the ethanol or for the containers made in stainless steel. In the same example, the whole hotel is using in majority Nespresso machine in the guests' rooms, but also for some Banquets events and in some of the back offices. None of the coffee capsule are sorted. It's a shame knowing that Nespresso put at the disposition of their clients no less than 80 recycling points in Barcelona and its surroundings, without counting the small independent associations that recycle the aluminum.

The amenities and all their containers are all thrown away indifferently whether they are full or empty. So, the fact that the W hotels have changed their amenities brand for Comfort Zone, a brand respectful of the environment and of its impacts on the society is a big plus. However, as said the Expert 7 (Annex 13, p. 120), this change was a requirement of the brand itself. The power that the hotel W Barcelona has is not on the product itself, but more on the life of the product. The General Managers of the hotels have the rights to find solutions for the recycling of the containers for example, or for the product still inside when the guest has finished to used it during its stay. Those containers represent a consequent



amount of plastic. One of the solutions that was under discussion for the W hotel was to put dispensers directly in the shower. It was put aside for the moment due to the complexity of hygiene rules that went with the installation of such dispositive.

For the feasibility of such a recycling and trash management, some of the venues misses spaces for the storage. Changing the plastic bottles for other solutions that could later on be recycled means additional storage spaces for the full and empty containers. Storage spaces that the hotel doesn't have in abundance despite its size.

One of another main negative observation witnessed during the field experience was the use of plastic glass for the employees in the cafeteria. Besides, the researcher was given to see that many employees ignore the message that recons one glass per person and sometimes takes up to three glasses per meal. The consumption of single-use plastic glass is large and can be replaced. When a recommendation was made to replace them by crystal glasses which will be washed, same as the cutlery and plates, answers such as the consumption in water and space to store was the main problem. The difference between the cost of those plastic glasses and the tacit damage they do to the environment is still to be calculated, against the cost of washing system and a solution for the storage space.

In the same contradictory option, it can be state the fact that the paper towel was replaced in the employees' bathrooms by high-powered hand dryers, which is saving 35 kilometers of paper per month. But what is the consumption in electricity of those appliances? The idea is to preserve the natural resources of the planet, in that case, of the threes and paper. It exists paper more ecological amongst other solution that doesn't involve more energy.

Plastic is no less important regarding its unsustainable life and its damaging effect on the environment. Again, it is to be noticed that without a strict controller, those changes won't find answers before some time. Rigorous calculations and data gathering have to be made with a strict following that engage objectives and innovations.

The hotel W is still to be praised for a lot of individual action though. It has been seen that the consumption of some unsustainable materials in the hotel could be important but also unavoidable. That's why the careful choice of suppliers is to underline. By choosing suppliers that apply sustainable practices in their daily operations, the hotel W can rest on them and count them as active positive

partnerships. It is true that the headquarters of Marriott International imposed a new set of guidelines for the suppliers of its properties, helping the W hotel to take good decision. However, the final decision often goes back to the General Manager or the Purchasing Director when it is not question of a change involving a brand's standard, like the amenities' brand "Comfort Zone" which occurred in all the W hotels worldwide. More often than not, especially for the food and beverage goods, local suppliers are also prioritized, reducing the transportation impacts and developing Shared Value.

But for other individual examples, the hotel W Barcelona choose to replace the single use plastic bottle near the pools and on the beach by a mineral water in a carton container. It is using renewable raw materials which are coming from sustainably managed forests, certified by the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council). However, because of the pricing and the consequent amount of water bottle used in the hotel, this solution is not yet included in all the part of the W Barcelona.

### **5.1.3. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

Two main observations came out from the analysis of the Human Resources management of the W Barcelona; first, the human factor, through the human resources management in the W Barcelona is extremely well organized. Their business model to turn all their energy towards a personalized service for their guests through the 'Whatever Whenever' philosophy, but also for their employees thanks to the Take Care team and the active participation of the Human Resources department and the employee's committee, turn the W hotel in a convivial and respectful workplace with significant advantages. On the contrary, the second main observation is the total absence of communication about sustainability whether it is with their external guests, or with their internal ones.

With the new Equality plan of 2019, and the particular care that the hotel has towards its employees, it was possible to observe that the internal guest is cherished; outside work hours activities are offered, as well as special rewards and compensations, fair employment practices, free trainings in many disciplines, etc. Everything is made to increase the retention by putting the accent on the wellbeing of the Talents and to diminish the turnover at maximum. Marriott International share a lot of its strengths with the W Barcelona, but the Take Care team, proper to the hotel, is very active and has a big part on the wellbeing and overall satisfaction of the employees.

However, the hotel W Barcelona doesn't have any form of sustainable communication with its guests. And this represents one of the major negative point showed during the analysis. Although they do have a strong after-sale service, focused on the customer engagement, the Guest Satisfaction Survey doesn't involve any form of sustainability following questions. The external guest has, but very few options regarding its involvement with the sustainability of the hotel. Except the "Make a Green Choice" program available at the reception, which could also be seen at a form of greenvertizing. Since the entrance to its room passing by the public spaces, nothing is made to give options or knowledge to the guest. There are no signs, no communication, no special features, no special material. As seen with the recycling, in the room the guest has no option to sort his own trash, in the restaurant, there is no communication about the local food supplier that provide a fresh local meal. The guest has no option to participate in the wellbeing of the community.

Even before that, both the external and internal guests don't have any option to learn about the sustainability of the hotel W Barcelona.

First, for the form of the information, through the hotel's website, although the design is clear and fluid, there is no means for disabled people to have access to the content. And secondly, for the substance of the information, it is quasi inexistent. It doesn't exist online any document that resume the Corporate Social Responsibility of the hotel, neither a private document that could be sent to companies that would like to know more. For each sustainable information, the user will always be sent back to the Marriott platform and its Serve 360° program. It doesn't exist a personalized sustainable document for the hotel W Barcelona and it is one major defect when taking in account that more and more groups or clients want to know more about their sustainable practices. Sustainability is not a trend, and people care. A good and effective communication could allow the hotel W a wider recognition with its guests and the communities where it does business.

Inside the hotel, the sustainable communication with its internal guests is at the same state, absent. Since their first steps within the hotel, the employee is not given any information. Inside the Welcome manual, there are no information, no facts, no numbers. During the two days formation neither. It's a pity considering the day-by-day communication with the Talents. Every morning, a paper resuming all the daily information of the hotel such as the occupancy rate, the GSS indicators, the name and phone numbers of the departments' managers on duty and some random news concerning the activities or

the discounts that the employees have, is printed. It's called the "Warm up". On this paper, sustainable messages and incentives could be printed and shared with all the employees.

The results of the survey showed that the communication about the implementations is very poor with more than half of the respondents not knowing individuals' actions such as the food donation or the changing of LEDs. Even more acute, 80% of the respondents think that the hotel W Barcelona is not a sustainable hotel. This leaves place to a high margin for improvement towards a more oriented communication about sustainability. Let's also remind that the main vector for sharing and raising awareness is the human vector. By teaching the employees to have the good reflexes and the right information, they could later share that information with the guest which could result in a butterfly effect. Also, the results of the survey indicate clearly that the employees are motivated with 94% saying to care for the environment and 88% saying that they'd like to work for a sustainable company (Question 1 and 2).

## 5.2. STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATIONS

With no marketing, no communication and an almost invisible face that represents the sustainability in the hotel, the W Barcelona must involve sustainability from the bottom of its value chain. Great efforts are made in all the production and operations processes but are not following objectives. Without a strict control, a sustainable agenda and clear objectives, the hotel W Barcelona will never succeed to be a sustainable company and will be wandering on the way. That's why three strategic recommendations will be given as conclusions. The main one is general as it concerns the creation of a whole CSR philosophy and a new sustainable tourism practices, involving an agenda and corporate objectives. From this point flows the second recommendation; creating the post of a CSR manager that will have for functions to supervise and coordinate all the good practices done in the hotel. The last one is to design a new marketing and increase the communication whether it is with the external guests as the internal ones.

### ***CSR PHILOSOPHY***

As it has been seen in the Literature Review, the important thing to realize about the sustainability is that not all companies have to answer the same objectives and participation. Data on the actual performance and then, the right communication by being transparent is a key. The W Barcelona benefits of the marketing of Marriott, and maybe lean on their Serve 360° program too much. It could be believed that the hotel W would appropriate itself a sustainability management with a W style that match their innovative identity, but it is not the case actually. The sustainability is not yet included in all the decision-making process, prioritizing the economic side for many improvements.

Sustainability is not even present within the walls of the hotel. A lot of individual actions are undertaken but as there is no communication around them, few people knows about it. It doesn't exist training about sustainability for the employees, neither environmental awareness with the guests. The main actual negative point of the W Barcelona is the absence of marketing, communication about sustainability. Nothing can be found online, information is hard to gather from within because very sparse. More and more clients are asking evidences of sustainability and the hotel W starts to become powerless in this domain if it doesn't choose to act.

That's when enter the strength of Marriott International. By providing guidelines and international standards to all its properties, each hotel can find help and support. Some tools such as the Just Report

is a strong asset to the W Barcelona. However, and as seen all along this paper, nobody has the time or the real function to take care of such a responsibility. That leads to the second strategic implementation recommended.

### **CSR MANAGER**

The main concern is about the absence of CSR within the firm infrastructure. Most hotel now have a CSR manager or director to take care of all the facet of sustainability in a business. Usually the chief engineer or the general manager of a hotel is taking this function as an additional charge (Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, 2012). For the hotel W Barcelona, it's the Director of Operations (Expert 1), assisted by the Spa Director (Expert 3) and the Style Director (Expert 4). However, they all took it as supplementary task and admit to lack time (Annex 7, p. 90, annex 9, p. 100 & annex 10, p. 105).

During the Biosphere acquisition process, but also for the data gathering for this analysis, it has been seen that the information regarding specific points were hard to obtain. That's the reason why the hotel should need a represent, or even a committee that would reunite all the main actors, such as Purchasing, Maintenance, Human Resources, Marketing, amongst others departments, who would be led by a CSR manager that doesn't took Sustainability as a second task. His role would be to gather all the information coming from the different departments, make reports, calculations, estimations with metrics in order to fix new long-term and short-term objectives. Even the substantial savings made through energetic efficiency appliances could be calculated and then ring-fenced to flow into a CSR budget. He would look for new suppliers, follow the news about sustainability and find new innovations to implement. Surely the Guidelines for Suppliers provided by Marriott International is a great tool, but the actual Purchasing Director doesn't have the time to look for new suppliers local, fair-trade, eco-labelled products to change something the hotel already has. This new CSR manager could also find new partnerships with local associations for recycling or for other purposes such as events or activities that would raise the awareness. He could work in pair with the Human Resources department and the Take Care team to design new trainings and formations, but also to find ways to better communicate with the employees and the guests. This manager will also be able to assist to all the meetings that concerns sustainability, whether there are with Marriott such as the Serve 360° or the Junior Business Council, or proposed by the city of Barcelona, like the Biosphere. By reuniting all the information in one person, the hotel would have a clear representant that would be able to talk, create and be accountable of the progresses.

### ***SUSTAINABLE MARKETING***

With a CSR manager and a real sustainable philosophy involved from the firm infrastructure to the operational cycle, a truthful communication can be realized. The W hotel has to be careful not to practice a 'false' communication, leading to greenwashing. Until now, it didn't exist any document that reported the sustainable activities of the hotel. During the researcher's field experience, it was possible to observe for example, the assemblage of a draft which was sent without any sort of verification to an important client. Amongst the information, it can also be found outdated information and even wrong one. With a proper controller that would be in charge to gather the information and update it progressively, a document could be created. The W Barcelona could even publish its own reports on sustainability through their website if there was a strict following. By being sustainable and transparent on their doing, the hotel will earn a wider recognition and even attract new clients, clients who care.

The Biosphere Commitment is also a strong ally to the W Barcelona. Helping it to gather and to reunite the information in chapter, following long-term and short-term objectives, giving ideas to improve their value chain. Moreover, by obtaining the Biosphere recognition, the hotel W will be represented as a sustainable business via the Biosphere platform, and through others specialist websites and OTAs. There is no need to change all the corporate culture in one time, especially because the W Barcelona has already a strong identity and a clear business model. But the most important is to change the mentalities. Raising awareness with the guests, but also training the employees to have the good reactions and knowledge, which will then help them to pass the messages and be vector of awareness in their turn.

## CONCLUSION

All along this paper, it has been proven the importance of corporate social responsibility for businesses nowadays, especially in the tourism sector and the hospitality industry. If the hotel W Barcelona was to take decision about sustainability as it is actually thinking as a core business, and not sees it as an additional cost or a hindrance, it would see that the sustainability could lead to new opportunities and be a source of competitive advantage (Porter and Kramer, 2007).

The fact that the W hotel is a franchised hotel, which it is part of a bigger group and which possesses also an individual third-party owner, poses some limitations in the final decision power. Construction or maintenance that involve the façade of the building have to be seen with the owner directly for example. That's the role of the hotel's management to explain that sustainable improvements, whether they have a cost, they have to be seen as an investment. Those costs will have benefic returns if given time. However, for some smaller improvements, the last decision has to come from the General Manager of the hotel.

As seen during the Literature Review, it exists two types of Corporate Social Responsibility; the responsive CSR and the strategic CSR. As its name announce, the responsive CSR focus its strength on acting on their own emissions and activities' consequences. They just react whereas the strategic CSR which imposes sustainability in the value chain, through the operating practices and the firm infrastructure, with a strict control, a sustainable agenda and a clear program, also involves a strong social dimension. The strategic CSR is based on the principle of Shared Value (Porter and Kramer, 2006, 2011) and it's on this one that the hotel should focus its forces. It has been proven that fostering the economy and the social advancement of a community will also have repercussion on the businesses implemented in this area. It's only with a strategic CSR that the hotel W Barcelona will be able to have the most significant positive impacts and the best returns, which will in return provide a competitive advantage success.

The internal culture has to change, the managers should involve sustainability in their decision process, a budget should be created for the CSR, as much as any other department. Training and protocols have to be created and put in place. That's why, the hotel W Barcelona should find a way to turn their existing philosophy towards more conscious and respectful business activities. With the



implementation of a CSR manager to supervise and lead the movement, new results, more speaking, could be achieved. A wider recognition, a deeper competitive advantage and thus, more profit for the both the environment and the company could then, be reachable.

Remind the limitations. Even if the first part of the results can be generalizable findings about the sustainable model for the hotels and can be applied in other properties, this whole study was focused on the W Barcelona and variations may occur depending on the brand, the size and the location of the property.

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## EXECUTIF SUMMARY

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine the sustainable model of a hotel, in this case, of the hotel W Barcelona. By analyzing their decision-making process and the implementations made in their operational value chain, improvements were found, and recommendations given.

In order to achieve those objectives, review of academics and scientific researches were achieved to provide support and evidences of the right path to follow for corporates to reach their sustainable goals.

Personal researches were assessing thanks to the collection of primary data through in-depth exploratory and semi-structured explanatory interviews, with a studied group selected intentionally, composed by Executives Chefs of W Barcelona or specific responsible in Marriott International. In addition, a quantitative data research was led in form of a test hypotheses survey with a studied group of 100 people strong and selected randomly through the employees of W Barcelona. Those data were quantified and analyzed, as statistical relationships identification, in order to emphasize the results and conclusions.

The results have been providing the evidence of a lack of communication and a not-enough consciousness of the positive effect sustainability may have on the identity of an enterprise. However, the findings identify a willingness to do well and constant improvements in the value chain. Additional recommendations were given as part of the conclusions.

The first part of the results can be generalizable findings about the sustainable model for the hotels and can be applied in other properties. However, if results can be shared, the study was focused on the W Barcelona and variations may occur depending on the brand, the size and the location of the property.

## INTRODUCTION

It is vital for every companies to tend to a sustainable business nowadays, and especially the hospitality industry. First, because businesses represent the global economy and are the biggest strengths capable to change things (Porter and Kramer, 2007), and the Hospitality Industry is now one of the biggest businesses in the world.

And secondly because, the hospitality industry is “service”. If hotels can provide service for their internal guest but are unable to care for their neighbors, or even for the planet, they are not driving the word “hospitality” to its first sense. If they are ‘hospitality’, they have to care (Meyer, 2009). It can also boost the positive communication and the branding image of the company towards someone who cares for others, which will resulted in even more recognition and profit (Nielsen, 2014).

It also has been proven that the whole operational chain can be improved with the implementation of corporate social responsibility practices (Vastag, Rondinelli and Kerekes, 1996; Giménez Leal, Casadesus Fa and Pasola, 2003; Porter and Kramer, 2006), with CSR policies to help businesses recognized what can be their profit and help them put actions in order to find benefits for both the company and the society (Windsor, 2006; Garcia and Armas, 2007; Segarra-Oña *et al.*, 2012).

The objective of this study is to analyze **the sustainable business model of a company, and more precisely of a hotel, taking the case of the hotel W Barcelona**. At the end of this paper, it will be possible to highlight the major points of a sustainable business model for a hotel and thus, to detect the possible opportunities.

Three main objectives have been delimited and will serve as a roadmap throughout this study. The first one is to start with an analysis of the current state of W Barcelona’s sustainability, using for pattern the Disclosure-Performance Gap CSR analysis made by Xavier Font, Andreas Walmsley, Lucy Mccombes and Sara Cogotti in 2012 (Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, 2012) and the Sustainable Value Chain schema of Michael Porter, 1985 (Porter and Millar, 1985). The acquisition of Primary Data –through a survey and interviews- will corroborate the findings and help detect improvements area. The second step is focus on an implementation within the hotel, in this case of the acquisition of the Biosphere Recognition as a corporate sustainable tool. The third and last objective would be to analyze the findings obtained in order to present the final recommendations and conclusions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Using the sustainability to increase the competitiveness of a company is a subject which was largely studied and analyzed over the last few years (Porter and Millar, 1985; Vastag, Rondinelli and Kerekes, 1996; Porter and Kramer, 2007; Bernardo *et al.*, 2009). However, most of them think that, to be the most efficient, sustainability has to be taken as a road map and include it through the Triple Bottom Line via environmental management practices (Jesús *et al.*, 2011; Rodríguez-antón *et al.*, 2012).

### TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE (TBL)

In order to understand what CSR is, let's first analyze the concept of the Triple Bottom Line, developed in the 1990s by John Elkington. It includes three levels of actions; economic, social and environmental. By adding the Social and Environmental dimensions to the primary Economical goals of a company, he taught that businesses could create new "win-win-win" strategies that could benefit the company, but also its customers and the whole environment simultaneously (Elkington, 1994). By focusing on the social and environmental aspects as well, profits will now be calculated regarding all the company's operations' consequences. With the participation of the governments, international guidelines and indexes have been created in pair with for-profit and non-profit organizations (Detomasi, 2006; Albareda *et al.*, 2008), such as some Green Certifications to help businesses reach sustainable goals (Jesús *et al.*, 2011; Rodríguez-antón *et al.*, 2012).

### ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATIONS

A certification is an official approval to do something professionally or legally. It is also a way of ensuring that an activity or a product meets defined standards. The issue is that certifications can vary from a country to another, whereas International Guidelines or even Standards are more rules that remain unchanged.

The most acclaimed certification nowadays is the ISO 14001 (Chan and Hawkins, 2010) with more than 346,189 certificates worldwide in 2016 (Eshcon.co.uk, 2017). It's an Environmental Management System (EMS) created in compliance with the European Union's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). Often, EMSs are working in pair with other standardized Management System (Bernardo *et al.*, 2009) like the ISO 9000 about the Quality Management or the ISO 28000 focusing on the Supply Chain. All those Management Systems and Quality Systems regroup standards to help a business to

minimize and handle at best their operational effects on the environment, because remind it, ISO is the International Organization for Standardization.

However, all those environmental certifications have a price. With the participation of governments, certifications and recognition can sometimes be free (Detomasi, 2006). The Biosphere recognition is one example. Even if they offer a payable certification, very similar at the ISO 14001, they do propose a Biosphere recognition for free. Their main objective is to push the businesses of the Tourism industry to become more responsible, by making them understand that investing in sustainability will allow them greater returns, whether they are social, economic or environmental.

Most of those green certifications require reports, studies process and a strict following, either from the organization that deliver the recognition than by the head management of the company asking for it. For this, department such as Corporate Social Responsibility started to emerge within the companies.

### **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)**

CSR means Corporate Social Responsibility, also called “corporate citizenship” in some countries or “Conscious Capitalism” (Nielsen, 2014). In this case, CSR means companies that are conscious of their impact on the environment and on the society in general. Thus, they are specifically trying to do actions for and around those issues to help or prevent them. Which means find benefits for the business itself, consumers and the society as a whole; the Triple Bottom Line.

However, as TBL, CSR could mean different things for everybody and the range of action is quite large. Some can focus on social, other on environmental issues. For some business it can be non-profit association or volunteering, whereas for others it is directly included in their business plan and actions can be seen through their operational and strategical levels. Plus, they are adding profit for the company, whereas others are just philanthropic.

It is recommended that CSR must be included within the business model and thus, be a proper discipline within a company. It is important that CSR policies are aligned with the core values and objectives of the business and they should be applicated for all the activities through the Value Chain (Porter and Kramer, 2007; McNulty and Davis, 2012). Also, it is primordial that the management team is being involved in this process (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994; Kasturi Rangan, 2015).



## **THE VALUE CHAIN**

The Value Chain developed by Michael Porter (Porter and Millar, 1985), is a set of interdependent activities which are interconnected amongst themselves by linkages. Those linkages appear when the result of an activity affects the cost of effectiveness of another (Porter and Millar, 1985; Porter and Kramer, 2007).

If taking the example of the hospitality industry as this subject will treat about it; sustainability could be integrated in all the department of a hotel, through the Value Chain, from the hotel's infrastructure to the operational services (Porter and Kramer, 2007). However, it can be divided in two categories; the Primary Activities and the Supporting Activities.

In the Primary activities, it can be found the logistics, the operations, the sales & marketing and, in a more general way, the service itself. For the supporting activities, it englobes the hotel's infrastructure, the Human Resources department, the Technology Development department, and all the "back-up" services, vital for a business.

Also, analysis shows that a strategic approach is more beneficial for a company than an altruistic one (Husted and De Jesus Salazar, 2006). They have to connect their economic development and success to the well-being of the social environment. That is called Shared Value (Porter and Kramer, 2011).

## **CREATING SHARED VALUE (CSV)**

According to Michael E. Porter; CSV is "Corporate policies and practices that enhance the competitiveness of the company while simultaneously advancing economic and social conditions in the communities in which the company operates" (Porter and Kramer, 2011).

Corporates have to understand that responding to society's social needs does not mean losing money or using the shareholders' money on something that doesn't personally touch them. We all depend on someone or something else. A company can't sell products if there are no suppliers. It can't sell goods if there are no customers. It is primordial to understand the principle of sharing in Shared Value. A company's success is influenced directly by its environment (Porter and Kramer, 2011). With the technologies and innovations developed each day, new operating methods can be put in place. It will result on improving the efficiency, the speed, the quality and the availability of many products and

services that, therefore, will increase the overall functioning of the businesses. This is called Shared Value.

### **VALUE COMMUNICATION (GREENVERTIZING) AND GREENWASHING**

Transparency is crucial to earn trust (Porter and Kramer, 2007), so when a communication is made on a special product or service regarding its ecological benefits, because the objective is to reach someone, it's called "Green Marketing" or "Greenvertizing" (Banerjee, Gulas and Iyer, 1995; Grant, 2008).

However, if the word is new, the concept is not. In her book, Jacquelyn Ottman "Green Marketing: Challenges and Opportunities for the New Marketing Age" (1993), calculated the increase of green advertising in 1993 by analyzing the numbers of green ads. "The volume of green print ads grew by 430% and that of green TV ads grew by 367% between 1989 and 1990" (Banerjee, Gulas and Iyer, 1995). A more recent study from 2013 shows that green advertising almost triple since 2006 (Terrachoice, 2010; Delmas and Burbano, 2011).

One of the main issues faced by companies, and especially, large multinational brands, is the problem to do greenwashing. Indeed, the Greenwashing is a marketing method used by companies to orient their communication towards a "green" positioning, eco-friendly actions. According to the Jakarta Post, (*Commentary: When CSR is neither profit nor public good*) (Jakartapost.org, 2008); Greenwashing is the mix of 'green' and 'brainwashing' words. Often, this marketing method is used by large companies, usually multinationals, since their actions are the ones that impact the most the environment. So, in order to "clean" their image, those businesses are using greenwashing campaigns. It can be translated through actions like changing the packaging of a product, sometimes as simply as changing the color to a light green with leaves that will make you think this product is somehow sustainable, even if there are chemicals additives inside. Sometimes, to pay an environmental certification can sometimes be seen as Greenwashing because, if a business complies with a lot of rules, there are some, important ones, that are occasionally completely avoided (Jesús *et al.*, 2011).

## METHODOLOGY

### TYPE OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCH APPROACH

This work is a Descriptive research as it focuses on the collect of primary data to establish the actual sustainable business model of the hotel W Barcelona. But this work can also be seen as a Predictive research as it involved some form of human behavior condition which take in account a baseline (sustainable business model) already known. At all time, it was an Action/Business research as it required the involvement of professionals and a close collaboration between practitioners and the researcher.

The researcher's Epistemology position for this paper is Realism. In the case of this paper, scientific researches with the collection of evidence are priory made to establish a context. However, the importance of the social factor and its subjective dimension made this research experimental.

The research strategy or *research paradigm* used is Methodology, with deductive (general to specific) and inductive (observations to theory) researches. The quantitative method is the interpretation of phenomena and the qualitative an empirical assessment. Accordingly, the research approach of this paper is more Inductive.

### DATA COLLECTION

This paper is divided in two parts. The first part is a qualitative study and analysis of the sustainability of the hotel W Barcelona. With for purpose to understand and interpret the functioning of the Sustainability factor in the W Barcelona hotel. This analysis first used secondary data to get a scientific background as it took as template two scientific papers already published; "Corporate Social Responsibility: the disclosure-performance gap" published in 2012 (Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, 2012) and "Strategy & Society: the link between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility" published in 2006 (Porter and Kramer, 2006). Then, it used primary data for the in-deep analysis, the researcher scrutinized all the publicly information available via internet, made a site inspection with a consultant provided by the city and get most of his knowledge from in-depth exploratory and semi-structured explanatory interviews. With a studied group selected intentionally, composed by Executives Chefs of W Barcelona such as directors of departments, or specific responsible in sustainability for Marriott International.

See annex 5 for the detailed Interview Schedule and annex 6 for the interviews sum up. Refer to the annexes 7 to 18 for the individual's interviews.

The second part is using a quantitative data research to support the findings and start discussions. The survey is a test hypothesis, checking the cause and effect, and verifying predictions. The studied group is 100 people strong and selected randomly through the employees of W Barcelona. The 18 questions survey was made online and shared via professionals' emails accounts to the respondents. The first part of the results can be generalizable findings about the global sustainable feelings amongst the employees and may be applied to other groups. However, the second part of the survey, which focused on the W Barcelona will give particular findings and will help for the qualitative study.

See annexes 19 and 20 for the survey and its answers.

For few points, secondary data was acquired, and its limitations have been recognized. The researcher was aware that the results found on the government websites and priory made scientific studies were limited because not explicitly applicable to this research subject, the W hotel Barcelona. However, such sources were important in the gathering of information process, as it gave a solid background to put in application the final recommendations. The active participation of the governments and city council in this research is also to underline.

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All along this research paper, the quality and the integrity of this research is assured. The majority of the information gathered was freely available in the public domain. The rest of the information was gathered with the agreement and the help of the hotel's management. It does not involve an analysis of pre-existing data which contains sensitive or personal information. This study does not involve sensitive information but analyze facts that was freely available or given willingly by the company. Moreover, none information was copied or stolen from another work or study already existing.

For any direct and indirect exchanges made with research respondents via interviews or via the survey, informed consents were read and signed. However, as it concerns the case of an individual hotel, no names or private data will be shared within this study. All the information related to the private information of the respondents will be find in the annexes of the thesis to secure their anonymity and confidentiality.

## **FINDINGS**

### **FIRM INFRASTRUCTURE**

The W hotels are renowned for their quirky philosophy and for their unique business model which makes them stand out from their competitors and attract another segment of guests. However, their actual positioning regarding the sustainability is far from being a strength. Three main strategic observations were detected during the evaluation of the firm infrastructure. By strategic observations, this paper means that the results found were analyzed, allowing a more precise view of the positive and the negative strengths that the hotel W could rely on or on the contrary, improve. The involvement of Marriott International, the absence of Corporate Social Responsibility representant and the acquisition of the Biosphere.

#### ***MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL***

The first main point flowing from the analysis of the firm infrastructure of the W Barcelona is the involvement of Marriott International. As seen during the company's analysis, Marriott International is not a hotel owner, but an operating company, hired to manage properties owned by a third party. As a franchise hotel, the W Barcelona has to answer to rules, standards and guidelines imposed by the group's headquarters.

The support of Marriott International is an asset and a strength for the hotel W when looking for the sustainability. Indeed, with its new sustainability program called "Serve 360° - Doing good in every direction", Marriott is able to share its knowledge, experience and support with its franchised hotels. Support that can take the form of suppliers' contracts, standards or even shared guidelines. The W hotel is also enjoying the sustainable agenda that Marriott CSR team have created, helping them to reach goals more easily. By reuniting the strengths of each of its hotels, Marriott International created Councils by region in charge of the implementing sustainability within their hotels, but also creating a positive impact on the communities where they choose to do business; the Business Council, the Junior Business Council and the Serve 360° meetings.

Yet, one dark cloud appears when it comes to the clarity of all those different councils. People who are not really involved tend to be confused and do not understand the differences and the goals for each one, as confirmed the Expert 7, the General Manager of Renaissance hotel and in charge of the Serve

360 meetings (Annex 13, p. 122), and the Expert 2, member of the Junior Business Council (Annex 8, p. 97). The communication is also not clear for the employees. Sometimes, they do not even know that those councils exist, and especially the important role they have in the sustainability of the hotel. During the field experience, and the researcher's participation in those meetings, it was witnessed for example the superposition of events and organizers. The World Clean Up day of 2019 was first organized by the W hotel exclusively. However, in the same time, the hotel Arts of Barcelona also organized a clean-up walk via the Serve 360 meetings. After a while, the event was finally organized by the Junior Business Council.

However, even if the Business councils, the Junior Business councils and the Serve 360° meetings miss sometimes communication, they are still strong allies for the W Barcelona. They allow the hotel W to access to knowledge, experiences and a wider participation in lots of events and sustainable actions. Thanks to the Procurement, the hotel also disposes of preferred pricing when it concerns new products, or new contracts with suppliers. Also, the set of guidelines for suppliers imposed by the group's headquarters really help the hotel maintaining good practices. Moreover, as seen for the Biosphere obtention, and following the principle of Shared Value, the participation and the respect of sustainable practices regarding suppliers and delivery is mandatory for a positive impact on communities.

### ***ABSENCE OF CSR***

The second main observation about the firm infrastructure lies within the walls of the hotel W Barcelona. It doesn't exist a proper CSR department, or even a manager/director of sustainability. The survey's results even show that more than 80% of the employee's respondents don't know who is in charge of the sustainability within the hotel (question 12). It is the Director of Operations who takes this role as an additional charge. Himself admits that he needs help, and his absence to many councils is something that has been noticed during the analysis (Expert 1, p. 92). It is understandable that a director of such importance can't assume two functions at the same time. Yet, he can count on the strong support of some associates such as the Spa Director (Expert 3, p.102) and the Housekeeping (Style) Director (Expert 4, p.107). Notwithstanding, the interviewees all agreed that it represents a consequent amount of work and they do miss time.

During the meeting with the Biosphere consultant, this expert told the hotel that for the Biosphere good following, each property should need a representant, someone who would be in charge of the sustainability within the hotel. His role would be to regroup all the different information that touches the economic, environmental and social actions, but also to find new solutions, new suppliers and new ideas to always improve their value chain and involvement (Expert 11, p. 146).

### ***BIOSPHERE COMMITMENT***

The last strategic observation lies in the acquisition of the Biosphere Commitment. This intelligent sustainable management tool has requirements and objectives which will allow the hotel W Barcelona to improve their value chain on a long-term process and developing the principle of Shared Value. As they also rely on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, such as Marriott Serve 360°, the objectives are shared by the city, the community and also by the business' headquarters.

As seen during the first counselling session with the Biosphere consultant, the expert 11, the hotel W is already meeting a lot of requirements imposed by the Biosphere Commitment, but also need deeper changes within its functioning.

Amongst the important measures for end of 2019 that fit with the results of the analysis is the creation of documents and evidences that will support the sustainable actions undertaken by the W Barcelona. Exercise a positive and truthful communication between the hotel and its guests, creating a politic of tourism responsible and incorporate sustainable in all the value chain.

### **LOGISTICS**

#### ***ENERGETIC CONSUMPTION AND FOLLOWING***

The hotel W does hold reports on their energetic consumption, whether it is about the gas, the water or the electricity. They do a following every month and sum them every year. However, it couldn't be seen any form of following that concern the sustainability. Let's remind that the hotel W Barcelona is ten years old and as such, wasn't conceived with all the new technologies and eco-friendly material which are available nowadays. A regular maintenance of the building is done, but very few improvements have been realized towards a more conscious utilization of the natural resources. Yet, small changes can be seen such as the installation of LEDs in the building and lightning control sensors in the public spaces. During the interview with the Director of Maintenance (Expert 12, p. 151), it was

said that the savings made with the LEDs lights for example could be calculated but it is not the case actually. There is no following regarding the sustainability energetic costs. In consequence, the savings realized cannot be reinvested for CSR improvements.

When looking at the standards that concern the sustainability for the service, like the set-up of a room for a new client, it can be seen two types; the ones that maintain resources and the one that depletes them. The housekeeper must only flush the toilets two times while cleaning a room, which help diminishing the use of water. But in another hand, the TV and the air conditioning must be on before the delivery of the room for a new client. Between the cleaning, checking and lightning of those and the arrival of the guest, it can sometimes take hours of electricity functioning. As another remark, the hotel claims to have installed dual-flush toilet control. That's a good tool as it economizes water. Yet, when keeping looking in that room, the plastic is still the master of the place; amenities, water bottles, even the hotel's catalogue are printed and plasticized. Putting all those elements in the balance, and the results come out more negative than positive.

It is true that, when looking back in the back of the house, efforts are made. For all the machineries, new appliance and engine are now selected more respectful of the environment and added to the CAPEX as an investment. The eco-friendly washing machines, the sewage treatment plant, are all new installations which attest the goodwill of the hotel to do better in its activities.

However, and as seen earlier, the absence of real control about the sustainability is felt. That's the case for the solar panels. It's been a long time that the solar panels are not in use for maintenance problems that never got fixed due to more urgent problems elsewhere, has admitted the Maintenance Director (Expert 12, p. 151). One maintenance engineer even said that the solar panels "are a joke" (Expert 8, p. 128).

### ***TRASH DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING***

The results of the analysis of the trash and garbage disposal do but little more than the legal compliance required of any business by the city of Barcelona. Three main containers which represent the banal, the plastic and the carton are posted at the back entrance of the hotel and daily, external companies come to pick up the wastes.



The main negative point about the sorting of the trash is the lack of attention. The two main departments that produce the most waste are the Style department (Housekeeping) and the Stewarding department. And for both of them, very few actions were detected for the recycling of the trashes. The housekeepers have one garbage bag on their trolley when cleaning the rooms which means that everything they find in the room and that need to be trashed is put in the same bag; plastic, glass, paper, food, etc. All those garbage bags end up in the same container.

The amenities and all their containers are all thrown away indifferently whether they are full or empty. So, the fact that the W hotels have changed their amenities brand for Comfort Zone, a brand respectful of the environment and of its impacts on the society is a big plus. However, as said the Expert 7 (Annex 13, p. 122), this change was a requirement of the brand itself. The power that the hotel W Barcelona has, is not on the product itself, but more on the life of the product. The General Managers of the hotels have the rights to find solutions for the recycling of the containers for example, or for the product still inside when the guest has finished to used it. One of the solutions that was under discussion for the W hotel was to put dispensers directly in the shower. It was put aside for the moment due to the complexity of hygiene rules that went with the installation of such dispositive.

For the feasibility of such a recycling and trash management, some of the venues for example miss spaces for the storage. Changing the plastic bottles for other solutions that could later on be recycled means additional storage spaces for the full and empty containers. Storage spaces that the hotel doesn't have in abundance despite its size.

It is to be noticed that without a strict controller, those changes won't find answers before some time. Rigorous calculations and data gathering have to be made with a strict following that engage objectives and innovations.

The hotel W is still to be praised for a lot of individual action though. It has been seen that the consumption of some unsustainable materials in the hotel is important but also unavoidable. That's why the careful choice of suppliers is to underline. By choosing suppliers that apply sustainable practices in their daily operations, the hotel W can rest on them and count them as active positive partnerships. It is true that the headquarters of Marriott International imposed a new set of guidelines for the suppliers of its properties, helping the W hotel to take good decision. However, the final decision often goes back to the General Manager or the Purchasing Director when it is not question of a change involving a brand's standard, like the amenities' brand "Comfort Zone" which occurred in all

the W hotels worldwide. More often than not, especially for the food and beverage goods, local suppliers are also prioritized, reducing the transportation impacts and developing Shared Value.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

With the new Equality plan of 2019, and the particular care that the hotel has towards its employees, it can be seen that the internal guest is cherished; outside work hours activities are offered, as well as special rewards and compensations, fair employment practices, free trainings in many disciplines, etc. Everything is made to increase the retention by putting the accent on the wellbeing of the Talents and to diminish the turnover. Marriott International share a lot of its strengths with the W Barcelona, but the Take Care team, proper to the hotel, is very active and has a big part on the wellbeing and overall satisfaction of the employees.

However, the hotel W Barcelona doesn't have any form of sustainable communication with its guests. And this represents one of the major negative point of the analysis. Although they do have a strong after-sale service, focused on the customer engagement, the Guest Satisfaction Survey doesn't involve any form of sustainability following questions. The external guest has, but very few options regarding its involvement with the sustainability of the hotel. Except the "Make a Green Choice" program available at the reception, which could also be seen at a form of greenvertizing. Since the entrance to its room passing by the public spaces, nothing is made to give options or knowledge to the guest. There are no signs, no communication, no special features, no special material. As seen with the recycling, in the room the guest has no option to sort his own trash, in the restaurant, there is no communication about the local food supplier that provide a fresh local meal. The guest has no option to participate in the wellbeing of the community.

Even before that, both the external and internal guests don't have any option to learn about the sustainability of the hotel W Barcelona.

First, for the form of the information, through the hotel's website, although the design is clear and fluid, there is no means for disabled people to have access to the content. And secondly, for the substance of the information, it is quasi inexistent. It doesn't exist online any document that resume the Corporate Social Responsibility of the hotel, neither a private document that could be sent to

companies that would like to know more. For each sustainable information, the user will always be sent back to the Marriott platform and its Serve 360° program.

Inside the hotel, the sustainable communication with its internal guests is at the same state, absent. Since their first steps within the hotel, the employee is not given any information. Inside the Welcome manual, there are no information, no facts, no numbers. During the two days formation neither. It's a shame considering the day-by-day communication with the Talents.

The results of the survey showed that the communication about the implementations is very poor with more than half of the respondents not knowing individuals' actions such as the food donation or the changing of LEDs. Even more acute, 80% of the respondents think that the hotel W Barcelona is not a sustainable hotel. This leaves place to a high margin for improvement towards a more oriented communication about sustainability. Let's also remind that the main vector for sharing and raising awareness is the human vector. By teaching the employees to have the good reflexes and the right information, they could later share that information with the guest which could result in a butterfly effect. Also, the results of the survey indicate clearly that the employees are motivated with 94% saying to care for the environment and 88% saying that they'd like to work for a sustainable company (Question 1 and 2).

## DISCUSSION

With no marketing, no communication and an almost invisible face that represents the sustainability in the hotel, the W Barcelona must involve sustainability from the bottom of its value chain. Great efforts are made in all the production and operations processes but are not following objectives. Without a strict control, a sustainable agenda and clear objectives, the hotel W Barcelona will never succeed to be a sustainable company and will be wandering on the way. That's why three strategic recommendations will be given as conclusions.

### ***CSR PHILOSOPHY***

As it has been seen in the Literature Review, the important thing to realize about the sustainability is that not all companies have to answer the same objectives and participation. Data on the actual performance and then, the right communication by being transparent is a key. The W Barcelona benefits of the marketing of Marriott, and maybe lean on their Serve 360° program too much. People could believe that the hotel W would appropriate itself a sustainability management with a W style that match their innovative identity, but it is not the case actually. The sustainability is not yet included in all the decision-making process, prioritizing the economic side for many improvements.

Sustainability is not even present within the walls of the hotel. A lot of individual actions are undertaken but as there is no communication around them, few people knows about it. It doesn't exist training about sustainability for the employees, neither environmental awareness with the guests. The main actual negative point of the W Barcelona is the absence of marketing, communication about sustainability. Nothing can be found online, information is hard to gather from within because very sparse. More and more clients are asking evidences of sustainability and the hotel W starts to become powerless in this domain if it doesn't choose to act.

That's when enter the strength of Marriott International. By providing guidelines and international standards to all its properties, each hotel can find help and support. Some tools such as the Just Report is a strong asset to the W Barcelona. However, and as seen all along this paper, nobody has the time or the real function to take care of such a responsibility. That leads to the second strategic implementations recommended.

### ***CSR MANAGER***

The main concern is about the absence of CSR within the firm infrastructure. Most hotel now have a CSR manager or director to take care of all the facet of sustainability in a business. For the hotel W Barcelona, it's the Director of Operations (Expert 1), assisted by the Spa Director (Expert 3) and the Style Director (Expert 4). However, they all took it as supplementary task and admit to lack time (Annex 7, p. 92, annex 9, p. 102 & annex 10, p. 107).

During the Biosphere acquisition process, but also for the data gathering for this analysis, it has been seen that the information regarding specific points were hard to obtain. That's the reason why the hotel should need a represent, or even a committee that would reunite all the main actors, such as Purchasing, Maintenance, Human Resources, Marketing, amongst others departments, who would be led by a CSR manager that doesn't took Sustainability as a second task. His role would be to gather all the information coming from the different departments, make reports, calculations, estimations with metrics in order to fix new long-term and short-term objectives. Even the substantial savings made through energetic efficiency appliances could be calculated and then ring-fenced to flow into a CSR budget. He would look for new suppliers, follow the news about sustainability and find new innovations to implement. Surely the Guidelines for Suppliers provided by Marriott International is a great tool, but the actual Purchasing Director doesn't have the time to look for new suppliers local, fair-trade, eco-labelled products to change something the hotel already has. This new CSR manager could also find new partnerships with local associations for recycling or for other purposes such as events or activities that would raise the awareness. He could work in pair with the Human Resources department and the Take Care team to design new trainings and formations, but also to find ways to better communicate with the employees and the guests. This manager will also be able to assist to all the meetings that concerns sustainability, whether there are with Marriott such as the Serve 360° or the Junior Business Council, or proposed by the city of Barcelona, like the Biosphere. By reuniting all the information in one person, the hotel would have a clear representant that would be able to talk, create and be accountable of the progresses.

### ***SUSTAINABLE MARKETING***

With a CSR manager and a real sustainable philosophy involved from the firm infrastructure to the operational cycle, a truthful communication can be realized. Until now, it didn't exist any document that reported the sustainable activities of the hotel. During the field experience, the

assemblage of a draft which was sent without any sort of verification to an important client has been noticed. Amongst the information, it could be found outdated information and even wrong one. With a proper controller that would be in charge to gather the information and update it progressively, a document could be created. The W Barcelona could even publish its own reports on sustainability through their website if there was a strict following. By being sustainable and transparent on their doing, the hotel will earn a wider recognition and even attract new clients, clients who care.

The Biosphere Commitment is also a strong ally to the W Barcelona. Helping it to gather and to reunite the information in chapter, following long-term and short-term objectives, giving ideas to improve their value chain. Moreover, by obtaining the Biosphere recognition, the hotel W will be represented as a sustainable business via the Biosphere platform, and through others specialist websites and OTAs. There is no need to change all the corporate culture in one time, especially because the W Barcelona has already a strong identity and a clear business model. But the most important is to change the mentalities. Raising awareness with the guests, but also training the employees to have the good reactions and knowledge, which will then help them to pass the messages and be vector of awareness in their turn.

## CONCLUSION

All along this paper, it has been proven the importance of corporate social responsibility for businesses nowadays, especially in the tourism sector and the hospitality industry. If the hotel W Barcelona was to take decision about sustainability as it is actually thinking as a core business, and not sees it as an additional cost or a hindrance, it would see that the sustainability could lead to new opportunities and be a source of competitive advantage (Porter and Kramer, 2007).

The fact that the W hotel is a franchised hotel, which it is part of a bigger group and which possesses also an individual third-party owner, poses some limitations in the final decision power. That's the role of the hotel's management to explain that sustainable improvements, whether they have a cost, have to be seen as an investment. However, for some smaller improvements, the last decision has to come from the General Manager of the hotel.

As seen during the Literature Review, it exists two types of Corporate Social Responsibility; the responsive CSR and the strategic CSR. As its name announce, the responsive CSR focus its strength on acting on their own emissions and activities' consequences. They just react whereas the strategic CSR which imposes sustainability in the value chain, through the operating practices and the firm infrastructure, with a strict control, a sustainable agenda and a clear program, also involves a strong social dimension. The strategic CSR is based on the principle of Shared Value (Porter and Kramer, 2006, 2011) and it's on this one that the hotel should focus its forces. It has been proven that fostering the economy and the social advancement of a community will also have repercussion on the businesses implemented in this area. It's only with a strategic CSR that the hotel W Barcelona will be able to have the most significant positive impacts and the best returns, which will in return provide a competitive advantage success.

The internal culture has to change, the managers should involve sustainability in their decision process, a budget should be created for the CSR, as much as any other department. Training and protocols have to be created and put in place. That's why, the hotel W Barcelona should find a way to turn their existing philosophy towards more conscious and respectful business activities. With the implementation of a CSR manager to supervise and lead the movement, new results could be achieved. A wider recognition, a deeper competitive advantage and thus, more profit for the both the environment and the company could then, be reachable.