APPENDIX B
EXPERT PANEL SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
Face to Face Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Interview date:
Interviewee code:

Section 1 personal information
1.1 Name:
1.2 Position:

Section 2 electronic distribution channels (EDCs) and hotels
2.1 Can you comment please on this picture of how hotels communicate with customers, particularly the EDCs (Please see show card no. 1)?

2.2 Do you think that there should be or are any differences in the way that non-affiliated (independent) and affiliated (i.e. franchised, management contracts and marketing consortia) hotels manage EDCs?

2.3 What aspects do you think are important in selecting EDCs for hoteliers? And how do you see aspects mentioned by hoteliers (please see show card no. 2)?

2.4 How can hoteliers deal appropriately with price transparency?

2.5 What methods can be used by hoteliers to build customer relationships?

2.6 Some hoteliers find that communication with EDC companies is difficult, how could this communication be enhanced?

2.7 The relationship between some chains, franchisor companies, marketing consortia head offices and hotels needs to be more effective regarding EDCs management, how do you find that?

2.8 What is the future of how hotels will distribute their products?

Section 3 enhancements
3.1 Hoteliers suggested the following recommendations for enhancing their usage of EDCs (please see show card no. 5), what comments would you like to make about these? And what additional recommendations would you make?

3.2 Hoteliers in my sample mentioned what they need from EDCs’ companies (please see show card no. 6) how do you find them? What additional comments would you make?

3.3 This initial flowchart and the detailed explanation (please see show cards no. 7 & 8) are proposed to help hoteliers in evaluating EDCs. I’d like to hear your comments about them and how far do you think they are applicable for usage in affiliated (independent) and non affiliated (i.e. marketing consortia, franchised and management contracts) hotels?
Show Card No. 1

CUSTOMER

FUTURE CHANNELS

CLICKS

BRICKS

Mobile phone companies
Interactive digital TV companies
Online travel agency
Travel agency website
Travel agency
Switch website
Switch
GDS website
GDS
Representative company website
Representative company
TIC
DMS
DMO
Property Management System
Hotel website
HOTEL
CRS/CRO
Show Card No. 2

Hoteliers stated the following as aspects affecting their selection of EDCs:

- Reservation number.
- Cost.
- The brand name.
- Information quality
- Easy of use.
- Currency of information.
- Customer communication
- Customer loyalty.
- Online promotions (e.g., coupons, packages, etc.)
- Feedback
- Warm vibes
Show Card No. 3

Techniques used by hoteliers to deal with price transparency:

- Offer restricted number of allocated rooms for EDCs.
- Do not allow exceeding certain limits of discounts and commissions.
- Disintermediation (try to deal directly with customers).
- Changing rates of rooms according to supply and demand
- Best Price guarantee
Show Card No. 4

Methods of building customer relationships mentioned by hoteliers:

- E-mails
- Customer feedbacks
- Online promotions
- Loyalty programs
Show Card No. 5

Hoteliers suggested the following recommendations to enhance their usage of EDCs:

- Train their staff for dealing properly with EDCs.
- Recruit a dedicated person for dealing with EDCs
- Use EDCs effectively
- Train their managers for dealing properly with EDCs.
- Update and check the information of their hotel on different EDCs regularly
- Get connected more effectively with the same chain hotels
- Putting parameters for reservations in EDCs
- Increase their customers loyalty
- Put pressure on EDC to decrease their commissions
- Deal direct with customers (go further to disintermediation)
- Be present on many EDCs
- Get best deals with intermediaries.
Show Card No. 6

Hoteliers need EDC companies to:

- Personalize their services
- Make their websites and systems easy to be used by customers and hoteliers
- Build good relationships with hotels
- Be efficient
- Provide feedback to hotels
- Update information appear on their websites
- Provide much more information about the hotel.
Show Card No. 7

The Initial EDC performance Evaluation Flowchart
Show Card No. 8

The Detailed Explanation the Initial EDC Performance Evaluation

Flowchart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1- Does the hotel name appear on different search engines? | Check different search engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo) using a range of terms and record the results. Update the list of search engines and search terms in the light of customer feedback.  
- Does your hotel website appear in different search engines?  
  E.g.: Type “Big Sleep Hotel”, “Accommodation in Cardiff” or other key words you expect your customers are using in their searching for accommodation or for your hotel.  
- Do you use the appropriate search engine?  
  E.g.: If a hotel is targeting Chinese customers, hotelier has to check Chinese search engines for them, e.g. SINA Hong Kong in English and Baidu, 3721 in Chinese (if possible). |
| 2- Does the hotel name appear high on the search engine? | Check the order of the hotel website appearing on the engines and EDC websites on which your hotel appears. Record these results for assessing decisions related to EDCs in future.  
- Does your hotel appear appropriately in the different EDC websites you pay for?  
  E.g.: Is your hotel listed as being on a particular EDC by the search engine but is very low down the EDC listing or not listed at all on the EDC?  
- If you find your hotel appearing on certain EDC websites and you don’t know about them, contact them to find out why? Some EDCs have certain link and agreements with other websites to distribute for them. So when hotel makes an agreement with them it will automatically appear on several websites. |
| 3- Is the information on the hotel accurate, complete and attractively presented? | Price, location, quality of services, building customer relationships, wording, promotional offers, and website design are elements which you should consider for each EDC on which your hotel appears, as discussed below.  
Price:  
- Does the EDC website present the hotel price in a noticeable place at website?  
- Does it present to e-customer one price or different plans/prices about your hotel?  
- Does it offer all hotel room types with their prices?  
- Is the offered price cheaper than hotel website price (if it is cheaper and the hotel applies a best price guarantee the hotel has to reconsider its pricing technique)?  
- Are other hotel(s) recommended to e-customers by the EDC?  
- Does EDC apply a best price guarantee?  
Location:  
- Does EDC mention where hotel location in details is?  
- Does EDC mention all tourist or/and business attractions in hotel area/destination?  
- Does EDC mention how far is the nearest tourist or/and business attractions from the hotel?  
- Does EDC present a map with hotel location and accessibility from airport; train station; coach station and motorway? |
**Quality of services:**
- Does the EDC demonstrate the hotel services?
- How does the EDC present these services (with pictures/in details/briefly)?
- Does the EDC mention the hotel’s guest amenities?
- Does the EDC state how elegant hotel services are?
- Does the EDC let customer know the latest services/events at the hotel or at its destination?

**Building customer relationships**
- Does EDC give all customers’ contact details to the hotel?
- Does EDC offer an active link to hotel website or even mention the hotel website address?
- Do they offer hotel contact details to customers? If so, where are they on the website?
  e.g. In a remarkable position and under well formed subtitle or in a hidden position in the website

**Wording:**
- Does EDC use simple words?
- How does EDC describe the hotel?
- Does EDC offer hotel GDSs two letter access code? (Optional question)

**Promotional offers**
- Does EDC offer promotional offers?
- Is EDC updated with hotel’s special offers?

**Website design**
- Is EDC websites easy to be browsed?
- How far is it suitable to hotel customers?
  E.g.: if the majority of your customers are businessmen. Is its design and contents suitable for them?
  - Is it visually attractive?

### Table: Quality and Cost Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4- How many reservations has the hotel received through the EDC?</th>
<th>Number of reservations received from each EDC should be recorded, to be used in future as a tool for assessing any managerial decisions relating to the EDC and for its evaluation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Are the number of reservations gained through EDC acceptable? Acceptability will be determined by the cost and comparison with the number of reservations and costs of other EDC and distribution channels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- How much does it cost to appear on this EDC?</td>
<td>- Weight each EDC cost according to the number of reservations gained through it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Weight its brand name and any other element you feel which will affect your decision whether to continue or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Is EDC’s cost acceptable?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the answers to these questions need to be recorded for supporting future development of the hotel’s ongoing relationships with EDCs. Inability to answer these questions would suggest that the hotel does not have the appropriate time and skills to effectively manage its EDC relationships.