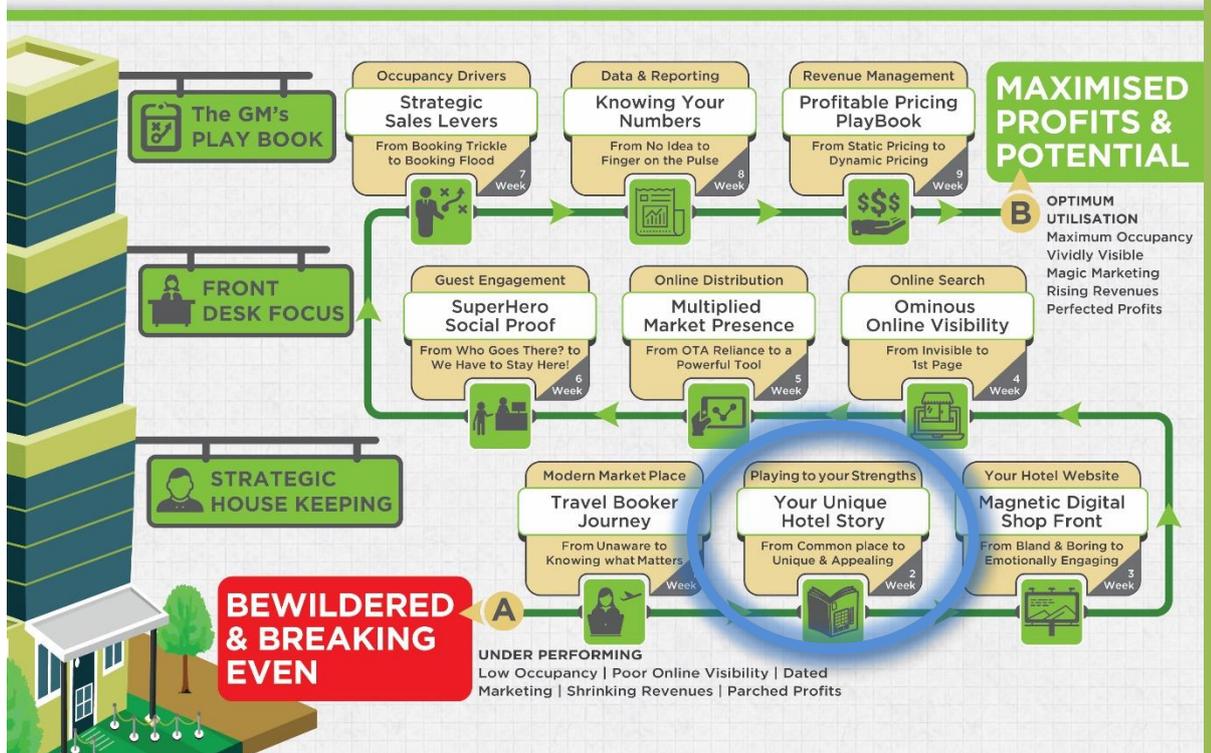


63 Day 80%+ Occupancy ROADMAP



The 63 Day 80%+ Occupancy ROADMAP

A proven step by step system for Independent Hoteliers to increase their profit by up to 50% in 63 days without increasing stress or work load



Module 2

Your Unique Hotel Story

Michael Harper & Andreas Palmqvist

Hotel Rescue 2017

Your Unique Hotel Story

From common place to unique & appealing

Module 2 – Playing to your Strengths

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Your Unique Hotel Story

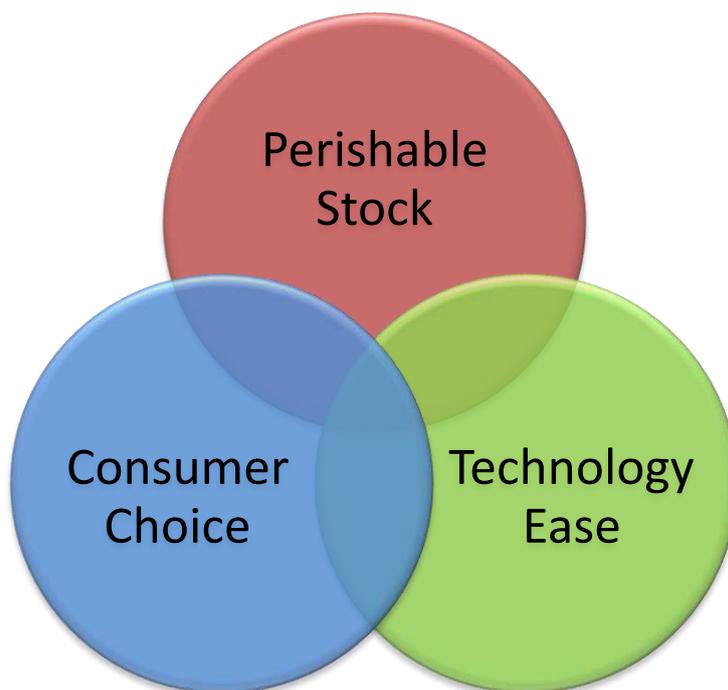
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Section 1.

Standing out from the Crowd

At its core, winning in the accommodation industry, like many other industries, is about knowing who your competition is, and beating them! While that may sound brutal on the surface, it is the reality. The situation is worsened in the Hotel game due to 3 key reasons:

1. The plethora of choices available to consumers in most locations
2. The perishable nature of your accommodation product, and
3. The ease at which consumers can research, compare and book properties.



It creates an environment where providers are clamouring to gain the attention of travel bookers with all sorts of tricks, facades and pricing strategies. This often leads to discounting wars and ultimately a race to the bottom, especially when demand is low.

So how do you gain that valuable attention without prostituting your product to the market? How can you stand out from the crowd and be a property of desire, well suited to your target markets needs and wants? What strategies can you implement to ensure you are clear about your properties standout strengths, and how can you portray them, in a moment, to capture the consumers' attention?

Often you only have a moment or two, or as Google put it, a micro-moment, to inspire the savvy travel booker and convey your message that you are the right property for them. Even if it's just to hold their attention for a moment longer to research your property a little further.

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Section 2.

Who is Your Competition?

So it all starts with understanding your competition. The goal is to establish a **competitive set**, which is just a way to describe a group of your closest competitors. You should be looking to select a group of 4-6 neighbouring or similar properties to yours that you feel are your most direct competitors.

There are two ways to go about this;

1. Consult Yourself (Who do you believe is your competitive set?)

This can be based off your local area and or your product style or level. For example, pricing similarities, local attractions and relative location to your product vs. other properties, market appeal and specialities, e.g. family friendly, boutique, couples focused etc.

How you break it down will come down to your local knowledge and research. The key to this selection criteria is research, visit your perceived competitors both in person and online, look at their pricing and marketing strategies then break it down. This will be how you will get a feel for who you should be competing with. So, this competitive set will be key in many future decisions that you may make from pricing, to product development and marketing.

2. Consult the Market Place

Simply, this is who the market is looking at when they look at booking your property or those similar to yours. Here you can look at traffic volumes using online tools such as semrush.com and follow.net. Even some of the third-party websites and their reports such as on Booking.com, they quite often will show you which other hotels the consumer is looking at before or after you and who the consumer is booking after completing their research (Importantly when you are part of that research). Also, you can look to reputation management sites, at time consumers will tell you why they stayed at other hotels vs. yours or visa-versa.

In the end you will need to come down to selecting a manageable competitive set to be able to bench mark your businesses performance against. Without this benchmark it can be difficult at times to decide if it's your business, or the market, that is doing well, or poorly? It's worth understanding this as it can be a powerful motivator in helping you achieve the best outcomes for your bottom line!

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Section 3.

What's Unique about Your Hotel

In the modern market place, (and not just in the Hotel Industry), the consumers' antennas are up when it comes to sniffing out false claims and dodgy deals. Likewise, if your messaging is clichéd, the consumer is switched off. Claims of being 'The Best', as an example, are simply ignored these days, and often the consumer won't even realise their doing it. Advertising throughout the ages has taught us to drown out these messages and seek the truth!

So how do you cut through these barriers and consumer resistance? It starts with knowing (or developing) your unique strengths, that set you apart from your competition, and then finding a unique way of portraying the message. But it all begins with firstly identifying your unique strengths.

How do you decide what is unique about your asset? It can be difficult to take the blinkers off and really develop some objective opinion here. Current marketing trends (ones that we believe will be around for a while to come) suggest that being able to tell a story and make it personal is the way to go. Big brand, multinational corporates and overtly cookie cutter operations are becoming the "Yesterday" of business. Have a look at the really successful players and how they are marketing, it's all about unique locations, their people in each operation and personalities behind the product that is getting traction.

We suggest that deciding what's unique about your product can be broken down in a few areas to help you make it easier to identify:

- Hotel Facilities – obviously and of course that's a great place to start
- In Room Experience - every room is different, why yours?
- Quality of Product – are you high end, value for money or budget?
- Quality of Service – full service, basic or hands off?
- People & Personalities – This can certainly be your staff but also can be your valued guests. Search hard for the stories.
- Hotel's History - everybody loves a good story, try to lean into the history of your property and have it help you stand for something
- Guest Favourites - look to see what your guests are saying. Check review sites and listen to their feedback and stories. Sometimes you will get lucky and pick up that all encompassing and winning tag line from what they have to say. If you are ever in doubt ask your guests, they will always tell you in a heartbeat.

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Section 4.

What's Unique about Your Destination

Most of you are locals and/or have a deep understanding of local knowledge. If you don't you need to ask yourself why did you buy this business? Or decide to run it! So with that knowledge it's time to spill.

Start by writing down a list and identifying the attractions that tick one of two boxes:

1. They have really strong pulling power (visitation)

and/or

2. If you were to partner with them, could you create a unique offering?

After you have written down your ideas and thoughts on this topic, your next step, if you haven't done this already is to go to your local tourism marketing body or chamber of commerce or even the local attraction owners! And ask the questions. Look to their visitor or entry numbers, ask them if they will share it with you, who knows you might even be able to enter into some marketing and sales partnership something that could give you that edge you are looking for? The local vineyard doing 3 weddings every weekend but don't offer accommodation? The train ride that's famous in the area that doesn't have a family friendly accommodation partnership.

The idea is to build a list existing attractions and/or potential future offerings with these attractions that will go into the mix.

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Section 5.

Motivator Matrix

Having followed the steps in sections 3 & 4, we now want you to take both your lists and put them through a weighted decision making matrix to help you decide what are the best factors to focus on. The aim is to create a shortlist of 4-6 items.

Download the tool attached to this module and populate the fields following the below instructions

The purpose of a Decision Matrix is to pass the decision making process through a selection filter and so reduce the subjectivity in decision making. When decisions are made it is rare that the factors that influence your decision are weighted equally.

Step 1. Create a list of all the unique strengths about your property and enter them across the top of the matrix.

Step 2. Brainstorm the Criteria/Factors that impact on the decision to be made. Aim for at least 5-10 such factors. Accept all suggestions at this stage. We have pre-loaded the tool with some basics, however you can create your own specific to you.

Step 3. Having chosen the selection Criteria/Factors, you now need to weight them individually to jointly total 100. (See example below in the Weight column)

Step 4. With the weighting in place you can now go ahead and score each of the selected options against each factor. Remember that your score for each option cannot exceed the weighting you have allocated to the factor. It is highly recommended that your first option be used as your benchmark for scoring the others and so rate it at 50% of the allocated weight. It is significantly easier to work across the table (scoring each Factor for each of the Unique Strengths) and then down to the next factor. This enables you to focus on one factor at a time. You then total all the scores.

Step 5. Discuss and agree the best option based on the scores. Pick your top 3 or 4 unique strengths that you feel you can now base all your future marketing upon. These we will call your 'Top Motivators'.

Step 6. Your finished Decision Matrix could look like something like this before scoring.

| CRITERIA/FACTORS | WEIGHT | Unique Strengths | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------|
| | | Hotel Facilities | Experience | Quality of Product | Level of Service | People / Personalities | Location |
| Ability to Market/Promote | 30 | 15 | | | | | |
| Emotional Appeal | 25 | 12.5 | | | | | |
| Practical Fit | 15 | 7.5 | | | | | |
| Budget Fit | 30 | 15 | | | | | |
| TOTALS | 100 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Benchmark | | | | | |

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Section 6.

My HOTEL Story

Now you have all the knowledge and tools to write your story.

Break it down into the points of research you have done and prepared above. Complete a full story, while you won't regularly use the whole story, outside of maybe a small section on your website, you now have a "Story" to provide you with the foundations for each marketing piece you develop over the time to come. You have a foundation document to keep up to date as time moves on and your product and local area develops and changes. It's this story you can use when you refer people to points about your product when you talk to them, directly or via the all-important responses on the reputation sites. It will become "Your Story" and "Your foundation" of who you and your product are.

For most practical use on the many platforms at your disposal, we encourage you to write two versions of the story. A long one first, perhaps 300-500 words, and then summarise into a shorter one of just 2-3 sentences.

Section 7.

RATIONALIZED ROOMS - Room Naming Conventions

An extension of your story is getting your room naming conventions and room descriptions right. This can be an arduous task when you first set out to do a review of it, however a very important one. Using words like 'standard' while may be accurate at times, it is also very uninspiring. Finding words that tell the truth, but don't put your potential booker off (or to sleep!) are key in capturing and holding their attention. It also valuable to have some synchronisation between your different room types so the booker can understand what's on offer quickly and easy. For an example you may need to have both a room 'Quality' description as well as a room 'type' description with the room naming. An example is below:

Classic Motel Room

Deluxe Motel Room

Classic Apartment

Deluxe Apartment

Equally in your room descriptions, which will be populated not only on your website but on the many booking channels, you need to put yourself in the shoes of the booker. What do they need to know, what are they looking for and what do they assume would be part of the offering already? For an example, there is probably no need to tell your booker there is a phone or an alarm clock in the room anymore as most people have mobile phones that can fulfil that function now. So, don't waste valuable content space with that sort of information. Be brief, to the point and appeal to what your market is looking for. You have just a few moments to hold their attention before they may move on to the next offering.

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Section 8.

Develop your 4 Key Motivators

Break it down and hit the top 4! Based upon the results of your decision matrix you should be able to easily identify your top 4 key motivators. If you pick them out and it doesn't feel right, ask yourself why, check your scoring and review. But ultimately you should go with your gut.

By selecting just four, it will help you become very clear in your messaging. After listing the top 4, try to emulate it into just one sentence. Then it's important to test this out, try them out on a variety of contacts, importantly none that are emotionally invested in giving you the feedback you want to hear. Secondly use people who are not aware of your product intimately. If a layperson gets it and motivates them, you are on a winner. Word of warning, please trial this out and be willing to adapt. Never commit an entire campaign without some form of testing. You wouldn't buy a car without driving it first?

Section 9.

Develop a USP or Tag line

From your 4 key motivators and the ensuing, tested, magic sentence, it now just needs a final polish to create your Unique Selling Position (USP) which can become your main tag line used across all marketing and media.

It may take some tweaking, but by working on it, testing and sharing, it will certainly come to fruition. Your tag line is just a handful of words that easily encompass the core of your offering.

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Section 10.

FRAMEWORKS

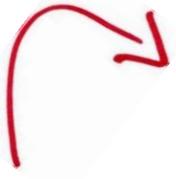
Explore the frameworks for Module # 2

Logon to the Hotel Growth Gurus Portal and download the available FRAMEWORK files.

Use the STRATEGY SELECTION TOOL to decide which frameworks to add to your MASTER HOTEL STRATEGY & Action Plan

Module #2 Frameworks

| # | Name | Type |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | COMPETITIVE SET | Action - MILESTONE |
| 2 | UNIQUE FEATURES | Action - MILESTONE |
| 3 | MOTIVATOR MATRIX | Action - MILESTONE |
| 4 | MY HOTEL STORY | Action |
| 5 | RATIONALIZED ROOM NAMES | Action |
| 6 | DIRECT DESCRIPTIONS | Action |



Click on the
Hyper Links

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Section 11.

FRAMEWORKS

1. Decision Making MATRIX – Discover your Unique Hotel Strengths using this tool
2. Simple Hotel Story Template **MILESTONE**