



An Evaluation of Hotels and Resorts' Websites:
A proposal for their effect on consumers

Prepared For:
Omni Homestead

Prepared By:
Longwood Consulting

April 3, 2018

Omni Homestead
7696 Sam Snead Highway
Hot Springs, VA 24445

March 1, 2019

Lucy White
Principal Consultant
8989 High Street
Farmville, VA 93092

Dear Mrs. White:

Subject: Evaluation of resort home web page and its effect on customers

The Omni Homestead Resort is an establishment in Virginia that has generations of families visit the resort for their family vacation. In the last 10 years, reservations have decreased by 10% annually. In recent studies it has found a strong correlation in internet presence to overall sales. According to studies, resorts with a strong online presence saw a 45% increase in resort reservations between 2012- 2018. The Omni Homestead Resort aims to increase overall resort reservation and customer satisfaction.

The Omni Homestead Resort has not updated it's website since 2012 and our present lack of a strong online presence has resulted in a steady decline of reservations. We wish to commission your team to deliver a report on how to improve <https://www.omnihotels.com> with the goal of making it a truly aesthetically appealing website which will lead to an overall improvement in prospective guest reservations. We wish to see the report submitted by no later than April 16, 2019 and to be presented May 23, 2019.

We look forward to reviewing your report and will gladly provide you with any other additional information. Feel free to contact me via my work phone at 555-033-444 ext. 333.

Sincerely,

Sarah Smith

Sarah Smith
Marketing Department

Longwood Consulting LLC.
8989 High Street
Farmville, VA 93092

April 3, 2019

Sarah Smith
Marketing Department
7696 Sam Snead Highway
Hot Springs, VA 24445

Dear Mrs. Smith:

Subject: Hotel and Resort website proposal completion

I have attached the report analyzing hotel and resort websites for their effects of website appeal for consumers that you requested in your letter of March 1, 2019.

We have recommended three websites that embody overall aesthetic design, ability to showcase amenities, and ease of accessibility:

- Hotel Weyanoke
- The Jefferson
- Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach

These three websites represent components that should be included in the updated Omni Homestead website to improve consumer appeals.

Longwood Consulting has enjoyed working with the Omni Homestead for this report. We would like to thank the Omni Homestead for the opportunity to assist in growth of the resort. Please contact Longwood Consulting if you have any comments or concerns, we will gladly address your needs. Please reach us by phone at 233-555-5544.

Sincerely,

Lucy White

Lucy White
Principle Consultant
Enclosure: Report on hotel and university website

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Executive Summary

A decrease in guest reservations has resulted in The Omni Homestead desiring to improve their online presence. The last remodel of their website was in 2012, resulting in desperate need for updates.

With the mass amount of resorts around the nation there is a need to have an exceptional online presence to attract customers. Airbnb is a new hospitality company, adding competition to the hospitality market. Longwood Consulting has recommended three hotel websites that provide a great example of hospitality websites.

Longwood Consulting analyzed three websites for overall aesthetic design, amenities showcase, and ease of accessibility. The report recommends the most important features for an attractive and informative website.

Each website was analyzed by the following criteria

- Overall Aesthetic Design: white space, color, layout, pleasant, headings
- Amenity Showcase: Amenity packages, links to activities, easy booking
- Ease of Accessibility: minimal out linking, easy to read, easy navigations

In addition to the analysis, 100 guests were given a survey. In the survey The Four Seasons received the highest scores on every criteria. This survey validated our recommendations to use the following websites as samples of resort websites:

- The Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach
- Hotel Weyanoke
- The Jefferson

The report is focuses to provide The Omni Homestead with recommendations to improve their current website. We are confident that Longwood Consultant's recommendations will help The Omni Homestead attract new customers and sustain their customer base.

Introduction

Resort and hotel websites are crucial for expanding and maintaining a large clientele. With websites being the key advertising tool to clients globally it is essential that the website is aesthetically pleasing, user friendly, and properly showcases the amazing amenities that the resort has to offer.

Omni Homestead, located in Hot Springs, Virginia, was built in 1766. This historic resort has become an iconic vacation spot for generations of families and is filled with cherished memories. Their mission is to provide guests with a relaxing vacation in a historic building with all the modern amenities.

At the Homestead's peak it booked nearly 95.6% of its rooms during the busiest season of April to August. In the last decade, the marketing department has seen a 5% decrease in reservations. The resort has a loyal clientele base, but unfortunately to sustain the costs of the resort they must expand their clientele to a younger demographic.

Two hundred and fifty people at random were selected to express their concerns with the current Omni Homestead Resort website. The top concern was overall aesthetic, closely followed by amenities showcase. The results of the survey are shown below in figure 1.

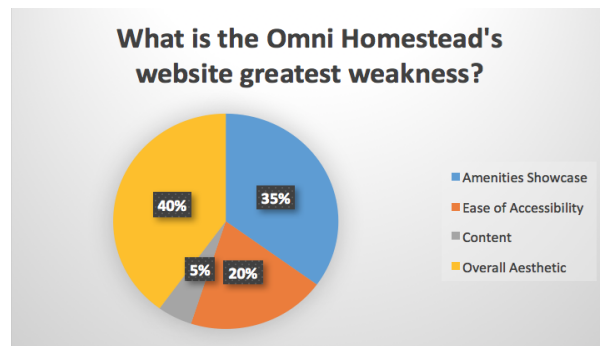


Figure 1: Weakness Survey Results

Longwood Consulting was commissioned due to a history of generating exceptional increases in website traffic. Longwood Consulting was founded by former Google employees who were experts in website design and software. Not only does Longwood Consulting understand the importance of a strong online presence but all employees are trained in basic computer programming.

This report will go into detail on the problems that The Omni Homestead website has and provide several recommended strategies to increase website traffic will improve the reservation rates.

Analysis of Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach

<https://www.fourseasons.com/palmbeach/>

Overall Aesthetic Design

The overall design of the Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach's website exudes luxury and cleanliness. The layout utilizes appropriate whitespace, eye catching photography, and simple texts. The website keeps with the same aesthetically pleasing pastel theme throughout the entire home page.

Photos that are displayed on the homepage are idealistic and present the resort in the best light. Videography allows for the potential guest to be engulfed into the website and feel as if they are experiencing the resort for themselves. The website has up to date photography that reflect the current amenities that the resort has to offer. Photos are situated in the website in a way that is not intrusive and adds to the overall aesthetic. Each photo reflects a different element of the resort, allowing for the homepage to appeal to many different clients' interests.

The homepage has a natural flow that draws the eye from the top of the page to the bottom. There is a drop down menu at the top allowing quick access to many different features that the website has to offer. At the bottom of the homepage there is another menu that is well organized with the different links to amenity packages. The main menu is on a black background with eye catching white text that leads customers to their desired page within the website. This keeps the home page clean and free of overwhelming amounts of texts and information.

Amenities Showcase

The Four Seasons is a well-established luxury resort that is known for its amazing amenities and breathtaking rooms. The homepage has ample links that allow a potential guest to book a suite that meets their individual needs. The rooms are showcased above the description of each suite package. This allows for guests to have a visual of their accommodations and a detailed description.

Along with suite accommodations, the Four Seasons also has different activity packages that are designed to attract different client bases. They have pictures of mouthwatering foods to appeal to foodies who are interested in the resort. Eye catching photos of exceptional landscapes with people enjoying fun outdoor adventures, is a way to appeal to clients that value amenities and packages that promote physical fitness. Four Seasons Palm Spring has an exceptional spa that has endless treatments to allow guests to relax and this is showcased on the homepage, along with detailed accounts of each spa package is linked below the luxurious photo of the spa.

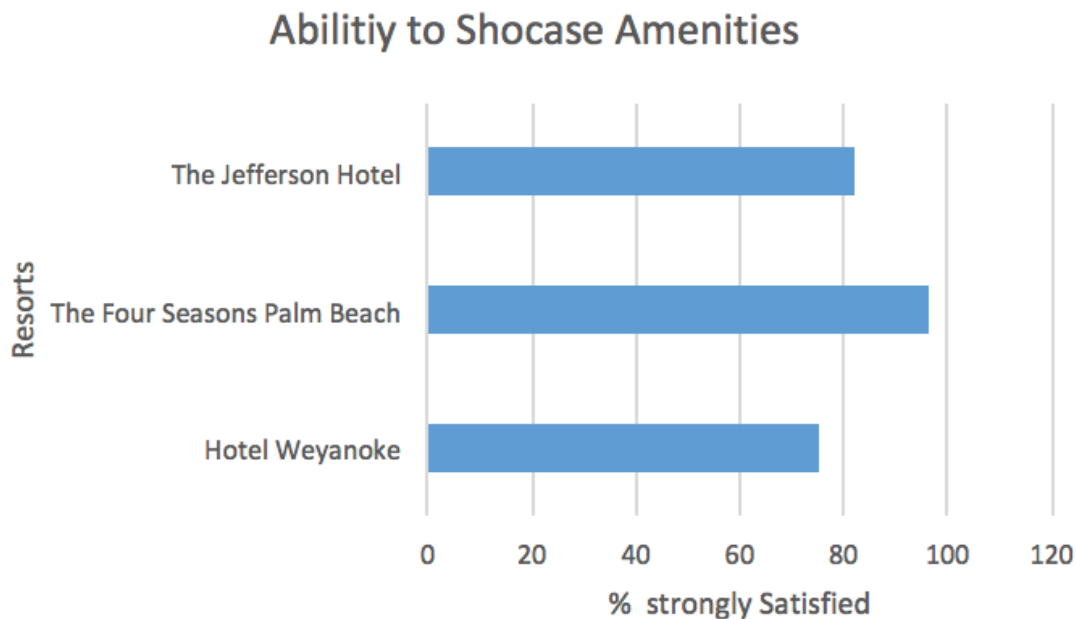


Figure 2 : Amenity Showcase Survey Results

Shown in figure 2, Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach received an 96 percent in showcasing their amenities. Those who completed the amenities showcase survey felt this resort was most appealing because of their ability to present the customer with many different packages.

Ease of Accessibility

The Four Seasons website is easy to navigate. It is user friendly for every age range and requires minimal computer skills to navigate. Every link is accessible and there are no 404 errors presented when attempting to access any link. Every basic standard has been met for creating an easy to access website.

Four Seasons is similar to Omni in regard that they manage several resorts globally. Each website reflects similar simplistic designs that create cohesiveness. The website provides links to other resorts managed by Four Seasons along with different packages at Palm Springs location that guests can purchase.

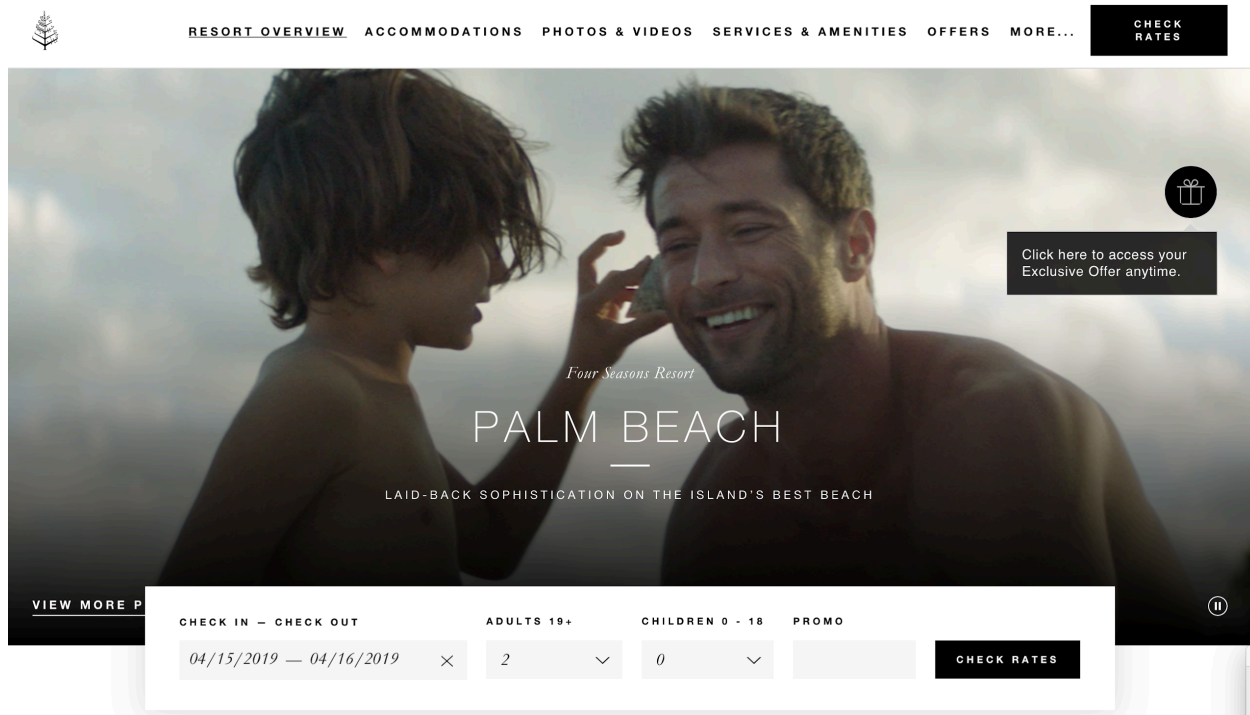


Figure 3: The Four Season's Resort Home Page

The bottom of the home page as seen in figure 3, has a check rates link. This is an amazing feature that allows guests to provide their desired accommodation desires. The website then provides the guests with a list of several different packages at different price points that they can choose from. This is a fantastic feature that simplifies the process of booking a room. Customer ease is essential when appealing to a large scope of customers.

Analysis of Hotel Weyanoke

<https://www.hotelweyanoke.com>

Overall Aesthetic Design

The design of Hotel Weyanokes website sets the bar high for competing hotels. The layout combines a sleek and color coordinated design that catches the eye without overwhelming it. The website exemplifies simplicity by utilizing a classic font along with an aesthetically pleasing photo layout. The entire website provides a smooth and tranquil experience for the eye while simultaneously providing optimal amounts of information.

The photos on the homepage are arranged in a way that allow for effortless reading throughout the website. Each photo adequately represents the perfect balance of the rustic luxury design intertwined within every single aspect of Hotel Weyanoke. The selection of photos works well to display the most appealing facets of Hotel Weyanoke in a manner that is visually satisfying.

The overall layout design is attractive and successfully guides the eye throughout the entire website. There are several tabs featured in the top right hand corner that provide a source of direction for those visiting the website for the first time. Similarly, the bottom of the website features tabs for parts of the website like reviews, contact information, and email offers.

Amenities Showcase

Hotel Weyanoke is a new version of an old hotel located at the base of historic Farmville, Virginia. The homepage of their website elegantly showcases the most noteworthy amenities of Hotel Weyanoke and provides numerous links in order to help their guests navigate the website efficiently. The packages and amenities offered are strategically placed throughout the homepage which allows for guests to learn more about the hotel without having to do their own research.

The amenities offered at the Hotel Weyanoke range from outdoor adventures to fine dining experiences. Hotel Weyanoke advertises the chic, modern components of their hotel that is located in the heart of a historic, small town. The website displays pictures of breathtaking scenery for those who live their lives in search of their next best Instagram post, a lively night scene for those seeking social interaction, and relaxing coffee shops for those who just want a break.

Ease of Accessibility

Hotel Weyanoke’s website can be navigated with ease. It is straightforward and requires little computer experience from its users. The links are clearly labeled and provide simple directions. All of the basic standards have been met when it comes to developing an easily accessible website.

Ease of Accessibility

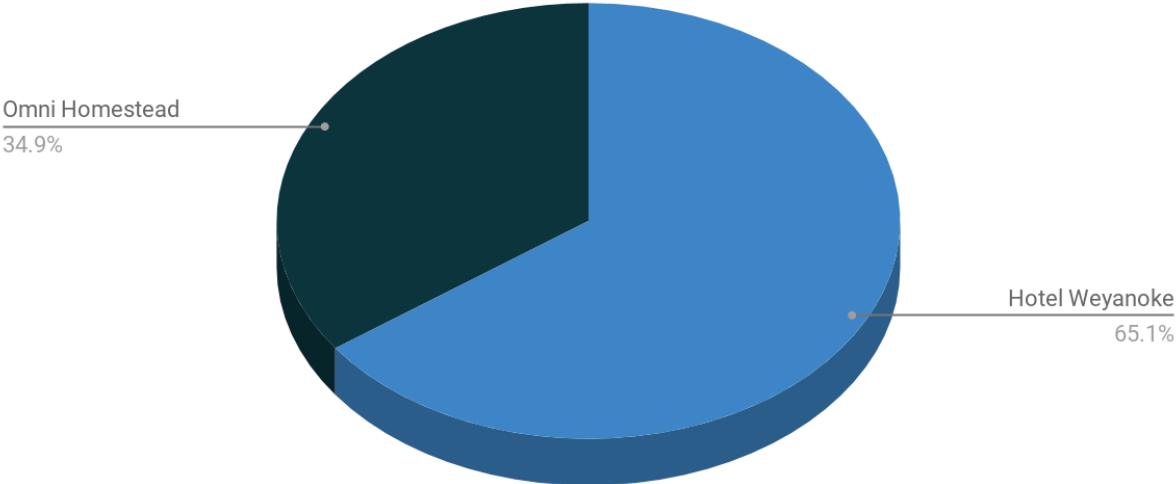


Figure 4. When navigating each website, Hotel Weyanoke was rated to be more accessible by 30.9%.

Hotel Weyanoke shares some similarities with the Omni Hotel in that they are both historic buildings with a goal of providing a luxurious and relaxing experience. However, in a survey, Hotel Weyanoke’s website prevailed in ease of accessibility over the Omni Homestead by 23.6%.

Analysis of Jefferson Hotel
<https://www.jeffersonhotel.com/>

Overall Aesthetic Design

The overall aesthetic design of the Jefferson Hotel is breathtaking. The lively photos that are displayed throughout the website show the true beauty that the Jefferson has to offer. The website itself is very simple, which makes it easier for customers to look at the different options that the Jefferson has to offer and book what fits best for them. The home page displays all the packages that are featured at the Jefferson including the Lemaire Dinner, Romance, Sunday Champagne Brunch, and the Bed and Breakfast package. The website gives the rates for both the premier and grand premier room for each package. The layout makes it easy for customers to explore all of Jefferson’s amenities.

The website has gorgeous photos of the rooms and suites, along with the beautiful views of Richmond City from the balconies. One feature that the website offers for their customers is that there is photo tour for each drop down on the menu, this is very useful for potential guests. These photos set the bar for what to expect when customers visit the Jefferson.

Aesthetic Design

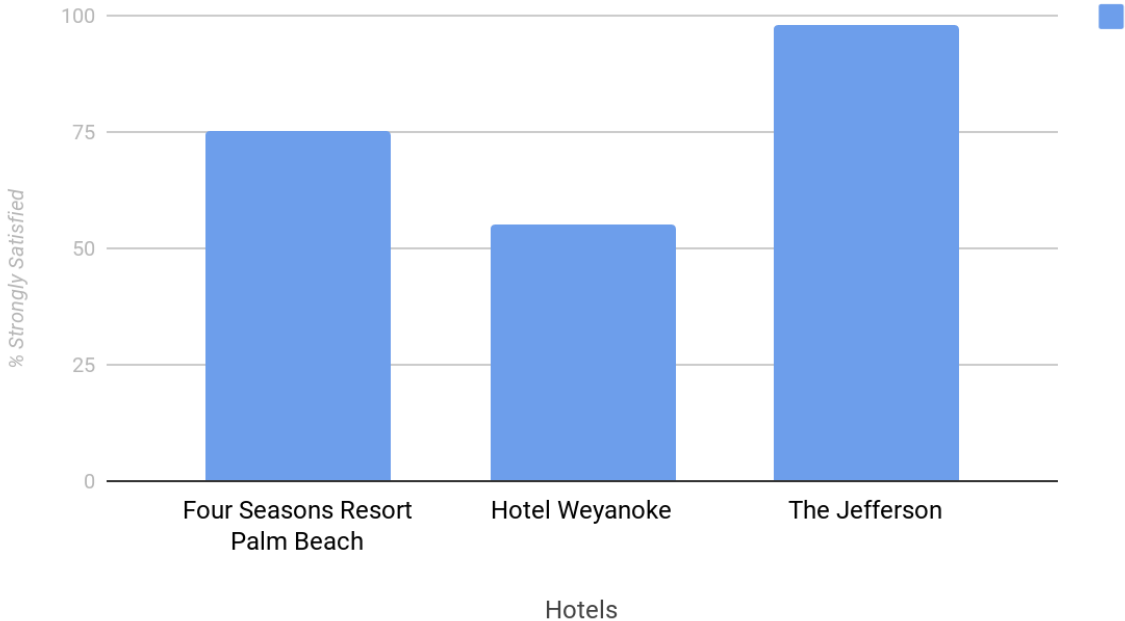


Figure 5: Aesthetic Design Survey

The Jefferson received 98 percent in overall aesthetic design, shown in figure 5. Customers who completed the aesthetic design survey felt that the Jefferson website's homepage layout was easy to navigate and that they had high quality photos that displayed the Jefferson.

Amenities Showcase

The amenities that the Jefferson has to offer have been carefully selected to provide optimal comfort and convenience for all guests. The website does a great job at describing the different rooms and suites that are available to customers. This descriptions will tell you how many square feet each room is, what size the beds are, and gives a little more detail about the layout of the rooms. All of this information can be found under the Stay drop down menu that is located at the top right of the website's homepage. There is also a detailed list of all the amenities that the Jefferson has.

The Jefferson also offers exceptional accommodations for exploring Richmond. Listed under the Explore drop down menu there is list of things to do or see while staying in Richmond, including where to shop, which breweries to go to, golfing options, historical sites and tours, outdoor activities, special events, museums, spectator sports, and performing arts.

Ease of Accessibility

The Jefferson's website is easy to navigate. At the top right of the homepage there is a link to check availability right away. In addition, the website has the phone number to call in order to make reservations. Overall, the Jefferson Hotel website is very accessible for customers.

In comparison to the Omni Homestead, the Jefferson's website is more user friendly than the Omni Homestead. Also, the Jefferson website's photos seem to have more quality, making the Jefferson stand out to their customers as the better hotel to stay at.

Conclusions

In the last 10 years, reservations have decreased by 5% annually for The Omni Homestead. The resort believes that they have room for growth and wish to increase reservations. The historic resort wants to showcase their beautiful facility that embodies all the original architecture while providing all of the modern conveniences that today's guests desire.

The hospitality industry is growing rapidly and resorts that do not have a strong online presence will struggle in the competitive hospitality industry. A properly designed website that focuses its energy on overall aesthetic, amenities showcase, and ease of accessibility proves to be a strong marketing tool in attracting new guests and maintaining a large client base. Implementing these design elements into the updated website would see a liberal estimate of 35% increase in website traffic and a conservative estimate of 15% increase in website traffic. The number of reservations would increase by 15%, increasing the annual reservation by +5% from last year.

Using various survey methods, Longwood Consulting concluded that the three best websites to embody all three vital design elements are:

- Hotelweyenoque.com,
- Fourseasonsresortpalmbeach.com,
- Thejefferson.com

The surveys concluded that The Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach best exemplified their ability to showcase their amenities. Photography and cinematography captured the resorts expansive amenities that attract a wide scope of guests. Hotel Weyanoke had the most efficient website in terms of accessibility.

All of the websites had their strengths, but The Four Seasons Palm Beach was the most visually appealing and surpassed the other websites when it came to overall aesthetics. Palm Beach website is not perfect however, its elements are attractive to a wide scope of clients. They have a strong online presence.

Recommendations

We recommend that OmniHomesteadResort.com implement the design elements from all three hotels/resorts websites. Specifically Omni Homestead Resort should utilize the strongest elements from each website as follows:

- Hotel Weyanoke's overall design, combining contrasting colors with an aesthetically pleasing layout. Their design is elegant and exhibits a sense of luxury within the hotel itself.
- Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach utilizes whitespace to simplify their website creating an aesthetically pleasing design.
- Jefferson provides links to various services simplifying the booking process and allowing the consumer to get an immense amount of information while keeping a clean design.

Appendix A: The Omni Homestead Website Greatest Weakness

Choose one design element that is a weakness of the current homestead website:

- A. Amenities Showcase
- B. Overall Aesthetic
- C. Content
- D. Ease of accessibility

Appendix B: Greatest Weakness of The Omni Homestead Website Results

Table 1: The Omni Homestead Website Greatest Weakness

	Amenities Showcase	Overall Aesthetic	Content	Ease of Accessibility
Percentage	35	40	5	20

Appendix C: Amenities Showcase Survey

1. There is an amenities package that pertains to my interest.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

2. The photography showcases the amenities well.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

3. The homepage of the resort's website makes me want to visit.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

4. I found it easy to select packages and purchase the package that interested me.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

5. The website provided me with ample amount of information about each package.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

Appendix D: Survey Results for Amenities Showcase

Table 2: Survey Results for Amenities Showcase

	Hotel Weyanoke	The Jefferson	The Four Seasons Palm Beach
Percentage	75	85	98

Appendix E: Ease of Accessibility Survey

Please indicate which website you feel executed each feature best.

1. Clearly labeled links to help navigate the website.
Hotel Weyanoke Omni Hotel

2. Appropriate explanations in regards to booking information.
Hotel Weyanoke Omni Hotel

3. Legible fonts with appropriate sizing.
Hotel Weyanoke Omni Hotel

Appendix F: Ease of Accessibility Survey Results

Table 3: Comparison of Easily Accessible Websites

Out of the 300 surveys sent out, 239 surveys were returned. The following table showcases the results.

	Omni Hotel	Hotel Weyanoke
Percentage	34.9	65.1

Appendix G: Aesthetic Design Survey

Please indicate which website you feel executed this feature best.

1. Layout of text and images make this website attractive.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

2. High quality photographs that display the hotel.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

3. Layout is simple and easy to navigate through.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Appendix H: Survey results of Aesthetic Design

Table 4: Aesthetic Design Survey Results

	Hotel Weyanoke	The Jefferson	The Four Seasons Palm Beach
Percentage	55	98	75

