Figure 17: The homepage of Richmond Marriott's website

The top of the website is also complete with a large area where one may enter their dates, number of rooms and guests, and a large view rates button, so it is simple to use and understand. Finally, the website contains several advertisements for things such as their Marriott rewards, their mobile app, and their qualifications to become a Starwood Preferred Guest, making it easy for the customer to find what they are looking for, as well as some extra things.

Since the Marriott has multiple locations all across the globe, a potential customer is taken from the corporate site to an individual location site after they have selected where they want to go. In this case, the Richmond Marriott was chosen. The homepage looks slightly different, but still organized and visually appealing. The magenta color is bright, but when combined with the white space it creates the perfect balance (see Figure 17). The fonts on the website are simple and easy to read.

The Richmond site also features a large image of their exterior on the homepage, drawing the attention of the potential customer. That photo is a part of a slideshow the customer may click through to see other shots of the hotel.

Interactivity
Both the corporate and individual location sites offer high levels of interactivity. Both offer menu bars that are easily accessible and easy to use (see Figure 18 & 20). The corporate site menu allows you to find locations, look at different deals and packages, check out the rewards system, and so much more. When looking at the Richmond Marriott, one can continue to explore the different menu items they have to offer.
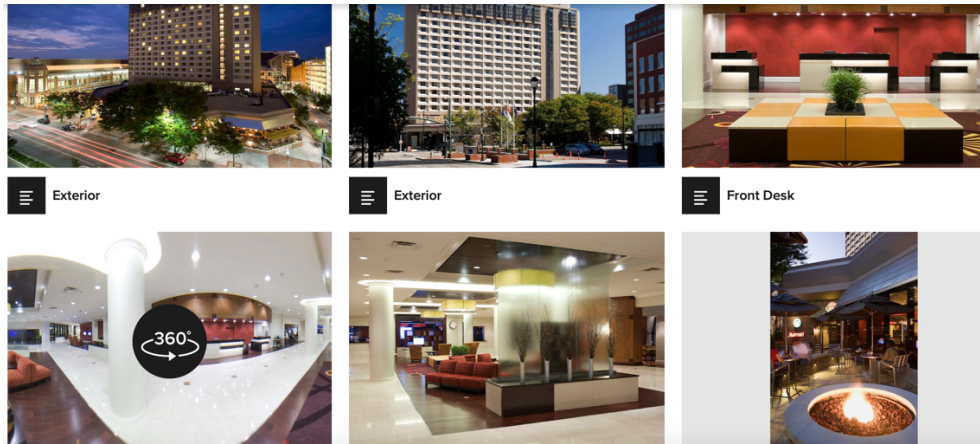
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Figure 18: Photo gallery and 360-degree tour of the lobby on the Richmond Marriott's website

After clicking the photos tab, one has the option of looking at various galleries. They offer both interior and exterior views, a 360-degree interactive tour of the lobby, views of the outdoor patio, and of course photos of the various rooms they offer and the amenities that are included. The sites also include maps of the area, surrounding attractions, and driving directions for the location (see Figure 19).
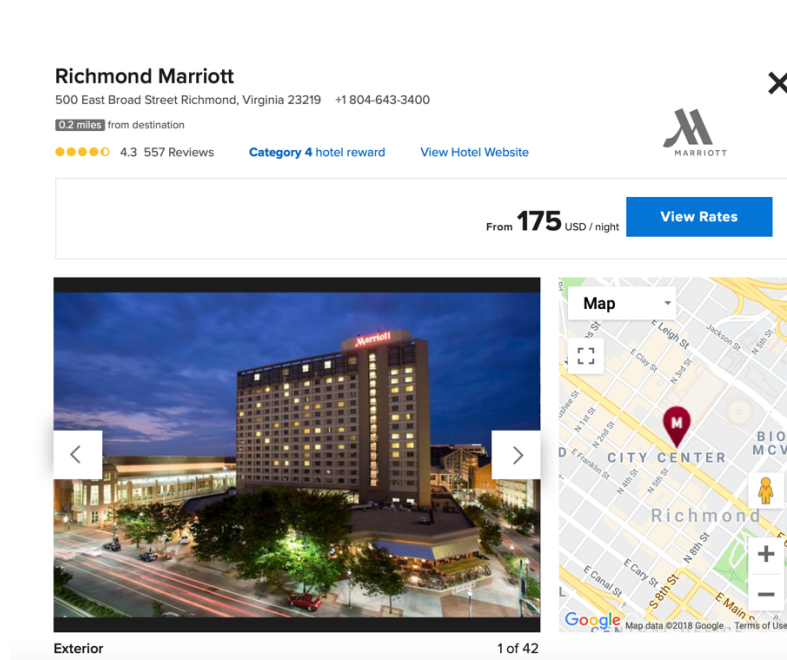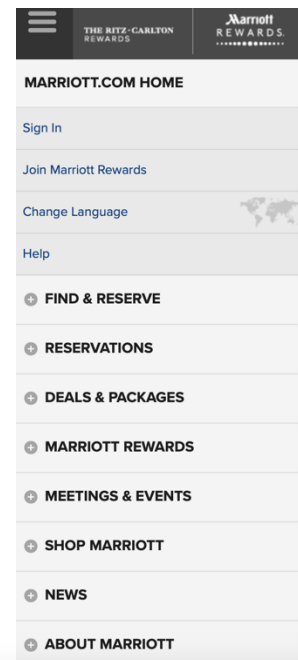

Figure 19: Richmond Marriott's map tab

Figure 20: Corporate Marriott sidebar menu

Both websites are built well and are very simple to use. They give the customer the opportunity to interact with the website in order to determine if it meets all their required needs for their stay. An additional interactive feature included is the social media links at

the bottom of both the corporate and the individual location sites. Each is represented by an icon and take the customer directly to the platform they choose. The only thing that the websites could use is a virtual tour of the guest rooms. Prospective guests like to see where they will be staying, and that is a great way to do that.

Quality of Content
Like previously stated, the main Marriott website is a corporate website that is simply a parent for the thousands of other websites for each location Marriott offers. The parent site is a "one stop shop" when it comes to searching for a location and offers quality content for each location that Marriott owns.
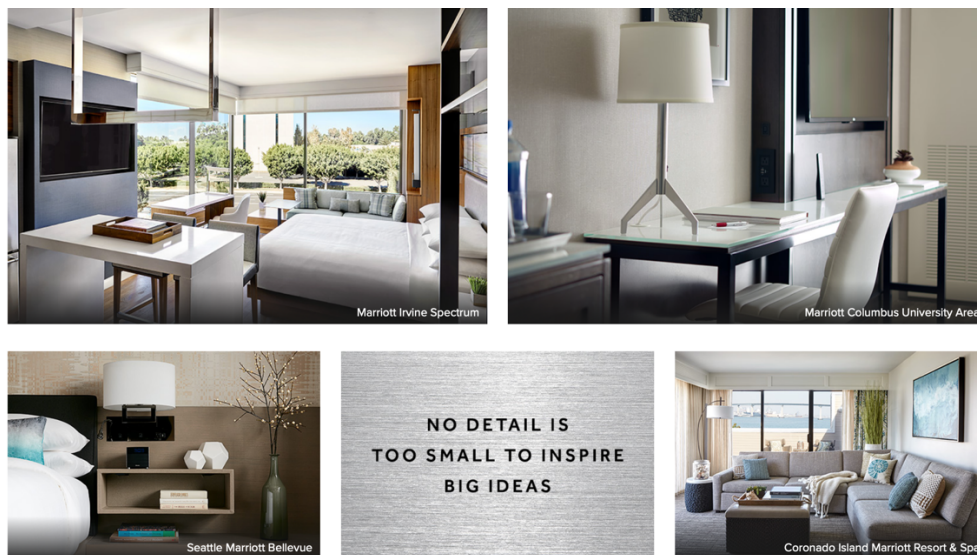

Figure 21: Example of the redesign advertisements on the corporate site

All the information is up to date, which can especially be seen through the "redesigned Marriott" advertisements all throughout the corporate site (see Figure 21). These redesign locations include all new facilities, all of which the website displays through galleries.

Once directed to the individual location site, the information is correct and specific to the location one chooses. They include a section that gives you all the quick information one may need about the actual rooms, including things such as highlights, bathroom features, internet and phone, and all the other features that the room includes (see Figure 22).

Room Highlights

Guaranteed

During your stay date

🛏✓ 2 Double Beds

Available and Guaranteeable

Customize these during your booking

✓ Shower and Tub Combination
✓ High Floor - 9th and above
✓ Low Floor - 4th and below
✓ Near Elevator

Accessible Room Features

This room type offers mobility accessible rooms

This room type offers accessible rooms with roll in showers

This room type does not offer hearing accessible rooms

Beds and Bedding

Maximum Occupancy: 5

Room Features

364sqft/33sqm-500sqft/45sqm

Air-conditioned

Connecting rooms are available (for some rooms)

Bath and Bathroom Features

Marble bathroom

Hair dryer

Furniture and Furnishings

Alarm Clock

Safe, in room

Desk, moveable, electrical outlet

Iron and ironing board

Food & Beverages

Room service

Coffee/tea maker

Instant hot water

Internet and Phones

Phones

Phone features: voicemail, and phone lines (2)

High speed Internet for a fee

Wired Internet for a fee

Wireless Internet for a fee

Entertainment

TV

Cable/satellite

CNN, ESPN, and HBO

Movies, pay-per-view

Radio

Join Marriott Rewards during your booking to enjoy free Wi-Fi at 6,500+ participating hotels

Figure 22: Sample list of all the amenities a room offers

The websites offer a "loyalty FAQs" section to answer any simple questions the customer might have and provides a help number for any questions that the website cannot answer. Quality wise, the only thing the sites are missing are an online chat assistant. While the FAQ section is helpful, and the sites do offer contact information, a resource like that could be very helpful to potential guests.

Analysis of The Plaza Hotel by Fairmont Website
https://www.fairmont.com/the-plaza-new-york/

The website for The Plaza Hotel is professional, neat, and organized. It has a great visual appeal and the graphics and information included on the homepage allow for a strong and positive first impression. Not only is the website professional and organized, but it allows the viewers to be interactive on the website and the quality of the content that the website provides is professional and authentic.

Visual Appeal
The Plaza Hotel's website uses many resources to allow their website to have a successful visual appeal to its viewers. The color theme throughout the entire website is consistent with soft grey and neutral colors. This allows viewers to feel less overwhelmed when viewing the website and the consistency with the colors allows for the website to be appear clean and organized.

Not only does The Plaza Hotel choose their colors wisely for their website, but they also have an effective use of graphics. Throughout the entire website they use a diverse range of pictures that showcase all of the services, different rooms, and venues that The Plaza Hotel offers. This allows viewers to see a glimpse of what services they will be receiving if they decide to stay at The Plaza Hotel (See Figure 23).
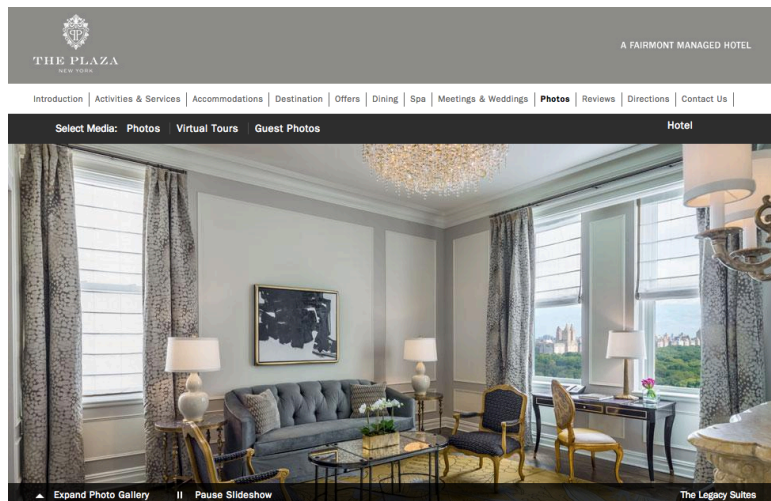

Figure 23: A picture that showcases the neatness of the website and the neutral colors.

Although the website for The Plaza Hotel has great visual appeal and an effective use of graphics, there are some pages on the website that have too much text. There are some pages that do not utilize white space and this can be somewhat overwhelming for the viewers. Although there are some pages with a lot of text, the text is arranged neatly and coherently on the page so this makes it somewhat less overwhelming for viewers. Although there are some pages with too much text, the text that is on those pages is important and professionally written.

The visual appeal for the website of The Plaza Hotel allows for a strong and positive first impression for the viewers. The website's homepage is professional, organized, and neat. There is also a menu at the top of the webpage with detailed tabs with different options that people may be looking for. This allows for viewers to have an easy time finding information throughout the website (See Figure 24).
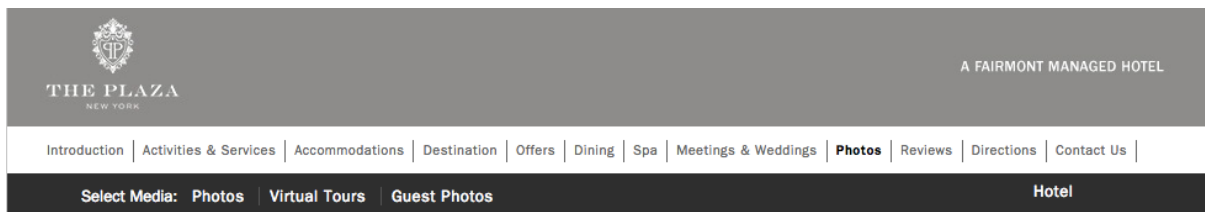

Figure 24: Menu bar that is present on every page of the website.

The professional pictures that are used on the homepage also allow for a good first impression because it shows that The Plaza Hotel takes pride in the services they provide and they want to show those services off in a clean and professional way. By using professional pictures, this allows viewers to obtain a clear view of the services that are provided by The Plaza Hotel.

Interactivity
The website for The Plaza Hotel is also successful in making sure that the website is interactive for its viewers. First, on the top of every page on the website there is an area where viewers can check the availability at the hotel (See Figure 25). Viewers simply have to enter the dates that they are interested in staying and the available suits and rooms will appear on the screen.

Once the viewers select a suit or room they will be directed to another screen with more information on the particular suit or room that they select. This area is also available on every page of the website making it easy for viewers to have access to checking availability at anytime.
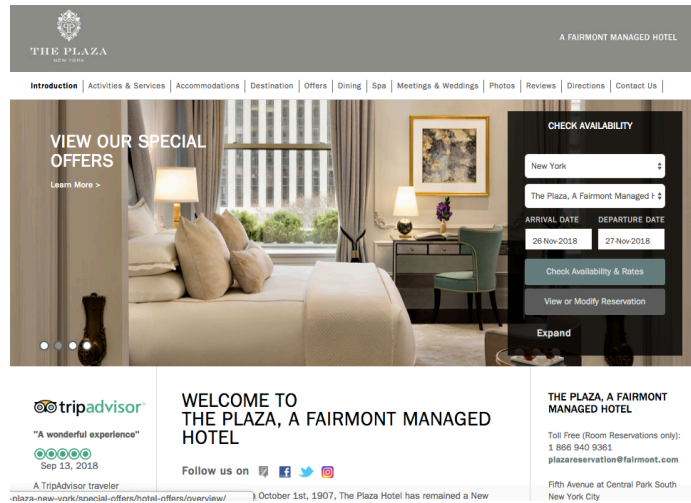
Figure 25: Easy access to checking availability of rooms.

Along with the ease of checking availability, viewers also have easy access to directions. In the main menu bar on the top of the home page is a tab for directions. Once viewers select the directions tab, they are brought to a map of New York City (See Figure 26). This allows viewers to have a visual representation of how to travel from wherever they are traveling from in the city to The Plaza Hotel.

This was also a good resource for individuals to have in the case that they do decide to stay at The Plaza Hotel because then they will know how to get to certain restaurants, plays, and parks during their stay.

Below the map are multiple links to different airports, train stations, and other transportation centers (See Figure 26). If viewers click on those links, the directions from that location to The Plaza Hotel will be provided to the viewers. This allows viewers to have easy access to detailed instructions on how to get to The Plaza Hotel from a variety of different places.
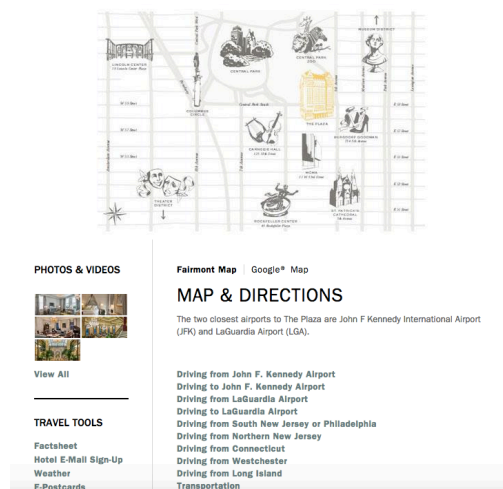
Figure 26: Map and links that are provided to viewers when they select the "directions" tab on the main menu.

There are also virtual tours and slideshows on The Plaza Hotel's website which allow viewers to be interactive on the website. The virtual tours are easy to find and viewers can look at different rooms of the hotel in more detail. There are many rooms that viewers could look at while taking the virtual tour. This allows for viewers to see the many services that The Plaza Hotel provides and help them in choosing the type of room that they want to stay in.

Along with the virtual tours there are also slide shows that viewers can look at. The slide shows are a good way to showcase the actual hotel rooms, dining rooms, ballrooms, spa areas, etc. Viewers can look at or read other things on the website while the slide show of pictures appears across the screen. All of these things contribute to viewers being able to be interactive on the website because viewers are able to click through the website and be interactive in finding the directions, viewing the virtual tours, and watching the slide shows.

Quality of Content

The quality of the content for the website of The Plaza Hotel is current, professional, and persuasive. All of the information on the website is current and up-to-date.

In the left margin there is a section with quotes from individuals who have recently stayed at The Plaza Hotel. The quotes shuffle through from different individuals and all of the quotes were given in the last three months. All of the quotes that I read were positive and the individuals expressed how much they enjoyed their stay at The Plaza Hotel. This is a great way to show viewers looking on the website that The Plaza Hotel takes pride in the opinions of those who stay there. Also, by allowing the quotes to be recent, it shows that the website is up-to-date and the thoughts that these individuals have are current.

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Along with the the up-to-date information that the website provides, the quality of the writing and pictures that the website produces are professional and persuasive. The writing that is on the website is clear, concise, and complete. There are no grammatical errors and it is easy information to read.

The usage of words that the website uses is persuasive and has the ability to really persuade viewers to decide on The Plaza Hotel when finding a place to stay. The website points out all of the assets and services that it offers which is enticing to the viewer. Not only are the words professional and persuasive, but the pictures are as well. The picture quality for the pictures featured throughout the website are clear, bright, and really showcase the neatness of The Plaza Hotel.

Lastly, on the website's homepage, there are links that viewers can click on that will take them to a list of awards with explanations that The Plaza Hotel has received over the years (See Figure 27). There is also a link to different press articles that were released about the hotel that showcase all of its success and accomplishments (See Figure 28).

Figure 27: An image of the hotel rewards for The Plaza.

Figure 28: An image of the hotel rewards for The Plaza.

This is a great way to showcase how professional The Plaza Hotel is and allows viewers to read more about its success. These are also great resources to use in order to be persuasive. Once viewers read these articles and read about the awards that the hotel has received, it may persuade them to choose The Plaza Hotel over competing hotels.

The website for The Plaza Hotel is dedicated to being successful in showcasing their services through great visual appeal, interactivity, and quality of content. By excelling in these areas, they have given viewers many resources to see the outstanding services that the hotel provides.

Conclusions

Comfortable and convenient accommodations are at the forefront of every traveler's mind. The hospitality industry grows consistently and rapidly, and remaining competitive, especially as a new hotel, is imperative. The easier a website is to navigate and use, and the more relevant and up-to-date the information is, will lead to increased reservations and events for your hotel.

There are thousands of websites available for hotels, motels, and resorts around the world. Establishing a new site can be a challenge if the information is low-quality and the site is difficult to navigate. Providing potential and returning guests with the most comprehensive website possible will ensure your business will thrive.

Our study concluded that the most helpful websites with examples of the best information are the following:

The Plaza Hotel by Fairmont, The Marriott International, The Holiday Inn, and The Days Inn.
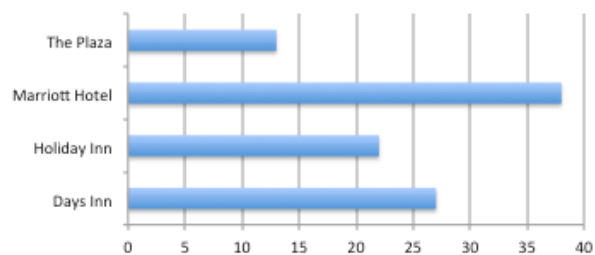

Figure 29: Summary of survey results

We analyzed these websites based on their visual appeal, interactivity, and quality of content. In addition to our analysis, we sent a survey to 100 individuals asking them to view each website and decide which one they found most appealing and easy to use. Figure 29 summarizes these results.

Our analysis ranked the Marriott International as the overall best of the four websites. It was the most appealing visually and contained the most useful and accurate information. This conclusion was supported by the survey results. The Days Inn, Holiday Inn, and The Plaza are ranked second, third, and fourth respectively. The Days Inn and Holiday Inn were lacking in strong use of color and overall visual appeal, but reserving a room and finding information was simple and direct. The Holiday Inn was the only website that utilized a virtual chat assistant allowing immediate for immediate communication. The Plaza was the highest quality hotel of the four analyzed, however the website was not as forthcoming with finding information and ease-of-navigation comparatively. All four websites were desktop and mobile friendly.

Recommendations

We recommend that Comfy Sheets & Suites use the following websites to model their website after:

- Days Inn by Wyndham
- Holiday Inn
- Marriott International
- The Plaza Hotel by Fairmont

Appendix A: Team Minutes

Landsberg & Sanfield Consulting Firm
Weekly Progress Meeting
Upchurch University Center
Wednesday, October 24, 2018, 7:00 PM
AGENDA

I. Call to Order- 7:05 PM
- Present- Kourtney Landis, Mason Moorefield, Maggie Santry, Hanna Schenkelberg
- Recording Secretary: Kourtney Landis

II. Approval of Agenda: Kourtney moved, seconded by Maggie. Passed unanimously.

III. Previous Minutes
- First meeting held by group

IV. Team Member Schenkelberg
· Worked with team member Moorefield to look up criteria used to discuss websites
· Decided to work on the Marriott International hotel

V. Team Member Moorefield
· Worked with team member Schenkelberg to look up criteria used to discuss websites
· Decided to work on the Plaza Hotel

VI. Team Member Santry
- Worked with team member Landis to decide on four hotels
- Decided to work on the Days Inn Hotel

VII. Next Meeting (Kourtney)
- Meeting will be held on November 14, 2018 at 7
- Each member will bring ideas regarding the criteria to our next meeting
- Begin working of front part of the paper

VIII. New Business
- Picked four different hotels we want to discuss in our paper

IX. Adjournment
- Kourtney moved that the meeting be adjourned. Passed unanimously. Meeting ended at 7:35 pm

Landsberg & Sanfield Consulting Firm
Weekly Progress Meeting
Upchurch University Center
Monday, November 19, 2018, 7:00 PM
AGENDA

I. Call to Order- 7:05 PM
- Present- Kourtney Landis, Mason Moorefield, Maggie Santry, Hanna Schenkelberg
- Recording Secretary: Hanna Schenkelberg

II. Approval of Agenda: Hanna moved, seconded by Mason. Passed
unanimously.

III. Previous Minutes
- Approval of minutes of last meeting. Hanna moved, seconded by
  Kourtney. Passed unanimously.
- Items arising from Minutes (if any): None.

IV. Team Member Landis
- Kourtney showed us the survey she completed for others to take, each team member
  took the survey
- Her personal information on her hotel was discussed and presented to the group

V. Team Member Moorefield
- Her personal information on her hotel was discussed and presented to the group
- Brought up the discussion that by the next meeting members should have completed
  their part of the body of the report.

VI. Team Member Santry
- Her personal information on her hotel was discussed and presented to the group
- Powerpoint for presentation was created and shared with other team members to add
  their information before the next meeting

VII. Next Meeting (Hanna)
- Meeting will be held on Monday, November 26th at 7 PM.
- Each member will present their completed assignments for the week. The group
  will analyze and edit the report together before the due date of the assignment. This was
passed unanimously.

VIII. New Business
- There was no new business.

IX. Adjournment
- Hanna moved that the meeting be adjourned. Passed unanimously. Meeting
  ended at 8:15 PM.

Landsberg & Sanfield Consulting Firm
Weekly Progress Meeting
Upchurch University Center
Monday, November 26, 2018, 7:00 PM
AGENDA

I. Call to Order- 7:00 PM
- ● Present- Kourtney Landis, Mason Moorefield, Maggie Santry, Hanna Schenkelberg
- ● Recording Secretary: Mason Moorefield

II. Approval of Agenda: Mason moved, seconded by Hanna. Passed
unanimously.

III. Previous Minutes
- ● Approval of minutes of last meeting. Hanna moved, seconded by
Kourtney. Passed unanimously.
- ● Items arising from Minutes (if any): None.

IV. Team Member Landis
- ● Kourtney showed us her slides that she was presenting in the presentation
- ● Her personal information on her hotel was discussed and presented to the group

V. Team Member Hanna Schenkelberg
- ● Her personal information on her hotel was discussed and presented to the group
- ● Brought up talking points for the presentation on Wednesday, November 28, 2018

VI. Team Member Santry
- ● Her personal information on her hotel was discussed and presented to the group

VII. Next Meeting (Mason)
- ● Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 28th at 7 PM to finalize the formal report.
- ● Each member will present their completed assignments for the week. The group
will analyze and edit the report together before the due date of the assignment. This was
passed unanimously.

VIII. New Business
- ● There was no new business.

IX. Adjournment
- ● Mason moved that the meeting be adjourned. Passed unanimously. Meeting
ended at 8:40 PM.

Landsberg & Sanfield Consulting Firm
Weekly Progress Meeting
Upchurch University Center
Wednesday, November 28, 2018, 7:00 PM
AGENDA

I. Call to Order- 7:00 PM
- Present- Kourtney Landis, Mason Moorefield, Maggie Santry, Hanna Schenkelberg
- Recording Secretary: Maggie Santry

II. Approval of Agenda: Maggie moved, seconded by Hanna. Passed unanimously.

III. Previous Minutes
- Approval of minutes of last meeting. Maggie moved, seconded by
Kourtney. Passed unanimously.
- Items arising from Minutes (if any): None.

IV. Team Member Landis
- Kourtney added her section to the final report
- Kourtney added the survey to the final report

V. Team Member Hanna Schenkelberg
- Hanna added her section to the final report

VI. Team Member Moorefield
- Mason added her section to the final report

VII. Next Meeting (Maggie)
- Maggie moved that no more group meetings were necessary. This was passed unanimously.

VIII. New Business
- There was no new business.

IX. Adjournment
- Maggie moved that the meeting be adjourned. Passed unanimously. Meeting ended at 9:00 PM.