

# **Customer awareness of sustainability at a luxury hotel – Case of QO Hotel Amsterdam**

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<p>This thesis covers the topic of methods to raise inner customer awareness in sustainable hotel according to its luxury and sustainable standards. This thesis accommodates information about environmental sustainability in hospitality, luxury, and customer awareness. The research done comprised information about sustainable tourism in a hotel sphere, how efficiently it can couple with luxury standards and luxury position of the hotel, and how in such conditions to include inner customer awareness inside the hotel without violating borders and standards of the hotel.</p> <p>Thesis's goal is to research case of QO Hotel Amsterdam regarding lack of customer awareness inside the hotel's building. Thesis objectives are: study methods of raising customer awareness about hotel's sustainable steps and actions, analyse what data should be displayed, and by what implies.</p> <p>Theoretical part of the study combines research completed in sustainability sphere; books based on main thesis' topics. It also accommodates successful cases from hotels all around the world, that have implemented sustainable approach into their operations. Same approach is used to cover topics of luxury and customer awareness.</p> <p>The chosen methods for data collection were observation and survey, which were done from January till May 2020. The survey was directed to a group of new employees to the hotel and the observations were collected while the author was doing her work placement at the hotel. The results of the thesis include data about the level of customer awareness of sustainability and recommendations to increase it.</p> <p>Survey data was designed into charts and tables for most convenient perception and analysis. After that, on the basis of survey and observation results, combined with theoretical background, different ideas were designed, and suggestions made. Suggestions and ideas were given not only in descriptive but also in visual way for reader's and employer's clearer appreciation and understanding how given suggestions can be successfully implemented into rapid hotel's life. As a result of thesis, different opinions and suggestions were created by author on how inner customer awareness can be changed successfully both to support current awareness sources and add new ones.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b>	
Sustainability, luxury, customer awareness	

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# 1 Introduction

In words of Brundtland Commission (1987), sustainability is: meeting our present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. According to UNT (2020): It (sustainability) has three components – environmental conservation, social responsibility, and economic development. While most people primarily associate sustainability with environmental conservation, it is about people and the health of our communities. As all people have only one planet, big operational businesses such as hotels started to apply sustainable measures to its daily life and operations in act of helping the planet to safe its resources and natural wealth for future. By doing so, they make an example to follow for both other accommodation and tourist businesses, and tourists. As people become more and more aware of natural problems and ways of solving them, tourists' expectations from hotels are also changing. Luxury trend in hospitality emerged with rich tourists' need of travelling on-level, means choosing best ways of travelling, as well as best options on staying. In 19-20<sup>th</sup> centuries it was enough for a luxury hotel to look expensive and provide extra services (that was limited in those times) to satisfy a guest. Nowadays, there is a "new luxury in hospitality", means that the traveller is seeking a more transformative and soul-enriching experience (Howarth HTL 2018).

This thesis is covering a topic of customer awareness about sustainability actions in QO Hotel Amsterdam. QO is a young luxury and sustainable hotel, which is doing a lot for environment. QO is acting with ecology protection, implementing different sustainable actions both its operations and services.

As progressive as QO Amsterdam Hotel is, it is lacking inner awareness towards customers, both coming for food or drinks and for guests coming to stay overnight in the hotel. Inner awareness lack means that the hotel not widely declares about their sustainable actions inside the building. This thesis work will research QO's case of lacking customer awareness inside the inn, on topic of the hotel's sustainable actions. The aim of the thesis is: How to increase customer awareness of the hotel's sustainability actions inside its building. Subobjectives: What information and how should be highlighted in order to meet luxury and sustainable standards of the hotel.

Firstly, the thesis focuses on three main theoretical topics most related to way QO is operating as a hotel: Luxury, Environmental Sustainability and Customer awareness. Thesis objectives are: study ways of bringing in customer awareness about hotel's sustainable actions, research what information should be highlighted, and by what means.

Theoretical part is based on different successful hotel cases and various research, what is more, it also covers theory about customer awareness done well in hotels and about luxury as a valuable part in hotel aesthetics. The empirical part of the thesis is based on my personal observations as a housekeeping employee in the hotel and from questionnaire given to new employees. Data collection is done in order to understand main missing points in inner customer awareness of the hotel, define what sources guests are using to gain information from, are these sources effective enough, what kind of information is it and research possible ways customer awareness can be improved most successfully. Finally, research results are presented and summed up in main points. In conclusion, based on data outcome, possible suggestions are highlighted with relevant ideas in graphics and text materials.

## **2 About QO Hotel Amsterdam**

QO Hotel Amsterdam is relatively new hotel in hospitality industry with a definitely unique concept of operating. It combines an element of luxury with sustainability, not only regarding towards guests' approach, but also in its own inner systems and operations. Luxury and sustainability are closely connected and supplement each other in all ways. One of QO's beliefs is that nowadays guests and tourists are coming to different accommodations not only to stay overnight, but also for self-re-charging, restoring the element energy. This is one of the aims which QO is setting in its everyday goals as a luxury hotel. The circular approach of re-using and re-charging is also used in hotel's operations.

### **2.1 Sustainability in QO Hotel**

According to QO (2018), a sustainable hospitality asset, the QO does not set limitation on the goal to reduce its environmental impact; they want to re-think the way hotels are and change them to become more sustainable whilst integrating them to become part of the neighbourhood. The QO wants to prove that embracing a sustainable, circular approach is the only way to create a genuinely positive impact for both people and planet. This is the way for the future of hospitality.

QO's goal was to be sustainable from very beginning. The unique design of the building allows the hotel to use 80% natural lighting. QO created a special water system, called "Grey water system": all the water that comes from the showers and sinks are being used again to flush the toilets. This allows to significantly diminish the waste of water. Water is also used in the heating system of hotel building. Refused to install conditioning system due to sustainable reasons, QO implemented different way of rooms heating- through water pipes. Each room can be cooled down or heat up maximum on three degrees using cold and hot water pipes surrounding rooms. (QO 2018)



Image 1. Inside one of the QO rooms (QO 2020)

As can be seen in image 1, in designing and building its rooms, QO used natural materials: recycled concrete from Shell tower Amsterdam, wood for the floors, glass and stone. Mattress, duvets, covers, pillows, and other bed furnishings are made from natural products: linen, feathers, and others. (QO 2018)

In standard QO's room guest can find sustainable bathrobe with slippers, storage space, wardrobe, and hangers for all needed clothes, conveniently situated safe storage, writing desk with a comfortable chair nearby. What is more, every room is equipped with big flat-screen TV, multiple number of sockets near bed with USB-ports. In bath area one can find full-length mirror, small makeup mirror with lights as well as some shower amenities like shower cap, comb, toothpicks, etc. In the room guest can also enjoy free coffee and tea, as well as minibar by its own cost. The main aspect of the room is king size bed with a good sustainable mattress, high-quality sheets, sustainable linen and different pillow types. In addition, guest can make a request for vary pillow, duvet type or any other amenity or room service they would like to receive. (Pinto, November 2019)

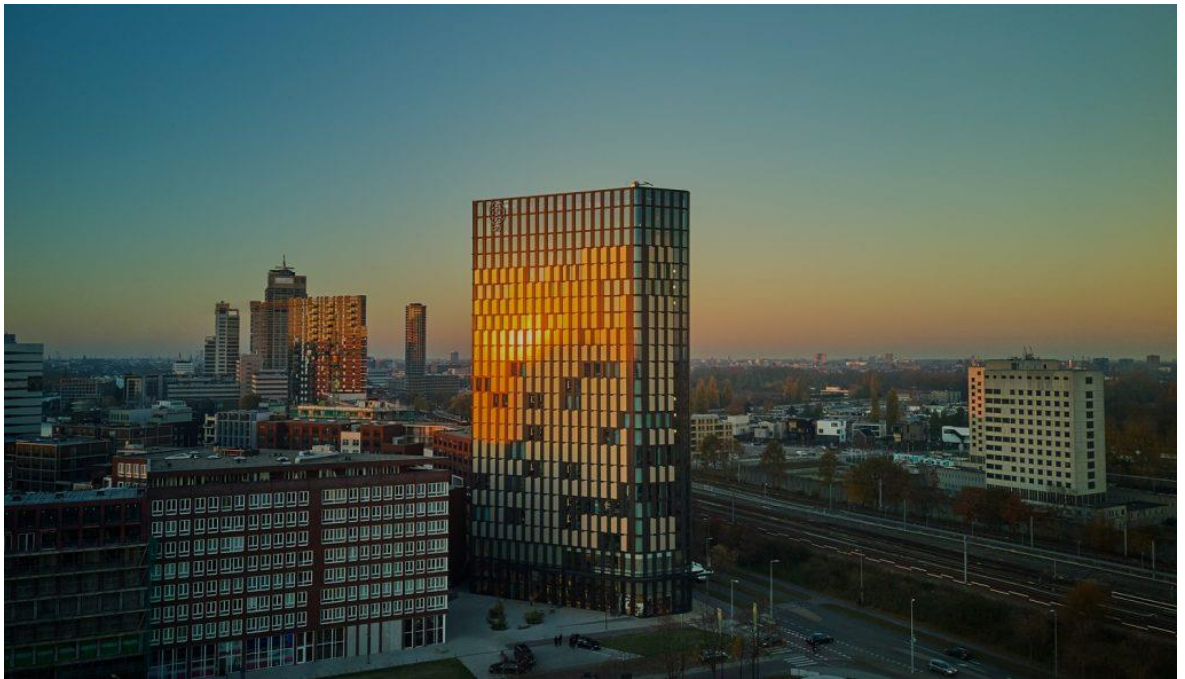


Image 2. Façade panels on QO building's surface (OQ 2018)

One of the most notable elements of the hotel is intelligent Façade (image 2), covering all building and allowing to control temperature inside the building. As it can be seen on image 2, it covers all hotel's surface. Comprised of a progression of completely responsive thermal panels, it adjusts and responds to the atmosphere outside the hotel, working as one or exclusively to control the temperature inside. Regardless of whether that is making additional protection on cooler days, or letting the daylight flood into warm rooms, QO is keeping its energy footprint low by just utilizing what they need. Likewise, the whole building's surface is built in a way to allow maximum amount of daylight inside the hotel. In that manner, QO save energy both on lighting and on heating, managing temperature and level of light with both big transparent windows and Façade panels. (QO 2018)



Image 3. Inside the Greenhouse (QO 2018)

One more visible from outside element of QO, in my experience, is Greenhouse (image 3), situated on the top of the building. Self-regulating system helps in growing different kind of vegetables, herbs, fruits, and eatable flowers, which can be used even in cold winter times in Persijn restaurant and Juniper&Kin (J&K) bar, situated one floor below Greenhouse.

All different kind of herbs, fruits and vegetables from Greenhouse are used in dishes in Persijn and J&K bar, not only protecting environment and decrease QO's environmental impact, but also creating unique luxury service for guests. Persijn preserve and serve Dutch traditional cuisine in system of a la carte instead of hotels' classical buffet in aim to reduce amount of food being thrown out. Juniper&Kin kitchen is serving food and dishes cooked under 41 degrees Celsius temperature to ensuring the perfect conditions for vitamin and flavour preservation of the ingredients. (Pinto, 15 November 2019)

What is more, QO have been Green Globe certified since July 2019. Green Globe is a worldwide certification program for sustainable travel and tourism. It focuses on the economic, social, and environmental management. This signifies official recognition by the world as a sustainable hotel.

The QO would not like just to reduce its environmental impact; it wishes to re-evaluate the way hotels are and transform them to become more sustainable, independent units while integrating them to be a part of the neighbourhood (QO 2020b)

## 2.2 Luxury in QO Hotel

QO is considerate to be luxury hotel not only because of its special style, but also because of its services. Analysed guests' and hotel managers' opinion about appearance of a luxury hotel from Quora (2020), one can highlight several features of a luxury hotel:

- Great location
- Many extra services available
- Easy booking process
- Attentive and caring staff
- Thoughtful design

Based on my experience and observations, QO meets all requirements above to be officially called a luxury hotel. It is situated in the bank of Amstel river, as can be seen from image 4 and 5, benefiting from it both with a breath-taking view on the city and river itself and with close location to the city Centre (15 minutes by metro).



Image 4. View from one of the rooms on Amstel river (Butomo 2020)



Image 5. View from one of the rooms on Amstel river (Butomo 2020)

Based on my experience, the hotel has many extra features to offer to its guests. Among them are: amenities, which one can order via in-room iPad, room service from restaurant, informational services from guest service or from info section on iPad. What is more, QO has porter services, such as carrying luggage from reception to the room and front desk services such as booking theatre tickets, calling a taxi and bike booking.

To book a stay at QO is very simple and can be done through their website directly or through such sites as Booking.com and similar ones. From my observations, staff of QO, never mind the department, is always ready to help guest with all possible needs and questions. Due to informational trainings and briefings, all QO staff is aware of hotel peculiarities and special features and can help if needed.

QO has its own style that can be seen in simple lines, pastel calm colours, and sustainable materials all across the hotel. Golden smooth lines can be seen inside rooms in cupboard design, calm colour of bathrobe is mirroring linen's, black floor of shower in mix with bedroom's wooden floor is giving guest a sense of style and simplicity, as can be seen on image 6.



Image 6. Inside one of QO's rooms (QO Instagram 2020)

As I observed, QO has a minimalistic design, that is considered to reflect luxury due to its simplicity. One of the most noticeable elements of QO design are golden lines candour and pastel calming colours, and their combinations, like pink, pastel green and gold which can be seen in meeting spaces or golden lines which can be found inside rooms and inside all the hotel.

To reflect the innovative ethos of the QO, the hotel collaborated with design partners who are pioneers in their fields. International firm Conran was selected for the bedroom design, while the hotel worked with the Dutch firm Tank to create public spaces, which design can be seen on image 7. (QO 2020b)



Image 7. Public area space in QO Hotel Amsterdam (QO Instagram, 2020)

Two different architects brought the QO to life. They worked collaboratively to bridge two distinct lines and create one of Europe's most sustainable hotels. Mulderblauw was chosen for their specialism in hotel design, while Paul de Ruiter was brought on board thanks to their expertise in sustainable architecture.

As much as interiors of QO are innovative, they are also sustainable. All which can be found in a room is made with touch of sustainability. For example, floors are made of re-used concrete and wood, bed linen is 100% cotton with feather filling. (QO 2018)

One more thing I noticed during my work placement in the hotel, in QO rooms one can find glass water bottles with fresh water, sustainable amenities like loofah, shower cap, toothpick, cotton pads. In the shower and near sinks guest can find big soap bottles of

shampoo, conditioner, body and hand soaps, and body balms, made by sustainable company Zenology specially for QO (can be seen on image 8). Zenology QO Clarisage has a special scent, invented by QO for guests. The hotel believes that special scent can create unique experience and memories, so by placing QO personalized soap amenities for guests, the hotel is making their (customers') stay in the hotel more memorable. What is more, as Zenology amenities is placed in rooms in big 0,5 ml bottles, this way the hotel shortens waste both soap and plastic. When Zenology bottle is empty, it is filled again with product and placed back in rooms.



Image 8. Zenology soap bottles made in collaboration with QO Hotel (Zenology 2020)

Combining all elements listed above in its design, QO reflects a luxury image of what guests are seeking and expect from luxury hotel in 21 century: simplicity, saturated and comfort atmosphere, made with taste. By offering extra or luxury services, QO is showing its care and uniqueness in customer's approach. Everything done in QO is executing with care about a guest and to form his/her most pleasant stay.

### **2.3 Customer awareness at QO Hotel**

From my experience and observations, QO Hotel Amsterdam has a good website page with some important information about its sustainable actions. It also has informative Instagram, where possible future guests can find interesting info (such as room info, Persijn info or any upcoming events highlight etc.) about the hotel. Unfortunately, no one can be sure how many guests, staying in the hotel, already know about QO's sustainable approach and actions from their social media or website.

During my work placement, I noticed that only sources inside the hotel customer can get information from are front office employees, Persijn restaurant employees, Juniper&Kin employees, info tab in room's iPad and regular hotel employees. From my observations, most information is received during check-in. Due to some personal facts (being tired, long check-in queue, short amount of time, etc.) some core information can be missed in check-in process. For same reasons, no one can guarantee that all information will be gained during Persijn or J&K visits. In case guest is going to spend all their stay in his/her room, the only source of information remains in-room tablet.

Unfortunately, from my work experience, it does not contain all info, and now it is unknown what percentage of guests actually open the "About QO" tab, so it cannot be guaranteed 100% that guest will get info from iPad. As one of QO's beliefs lies in communication, one of possible solutions can be placing info tags with small amount of core information for guests' awareness and for aim of them (guests) asking for more data about tags seen.

Aims of this thesis is through analysing new employees' answers understand sources guests are using to gain information from. In addition, what kind of information is it and if sources spreading this info are working effectively. What is more, one more aim is to understand in what way customer awareness can be improved most successfully.

### **3. Theoretical framework**

This part of the thesis is focusing on theory behind sustainability, customer experience and luxury (both in aesthetics and service level aspects) in field of hospitality. All separate parts are discussed based on topics research and real-life experience from hotels all around the world, presenting successful examples and ways these hotels used to achieve these great results. Among these examples QO Hotel Amsterdam is also used both as a theory case and to highlight some parts of its (QO's) sustainable approach. Later, theory material and these cases are studied as benchmark objects, on which suggestions could be based or referred to later at the end of thesis.

#### **3.1 Sustainability in hospitality**

Nowadays sustainability is one of the most important subjects discussed all around the world and in all spheres of people' lives, starting from economics to tourism. Sustainable tourism became very popular over past years, taking a place of a trend in all spheres of tourism. Currently more and more travelling people tend to choose sustainable products and services, as well as sustainable accommodations. According to the United Nations (2020), sustainability is defined as activities that "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Therefore, sustainability in hospitality will mean to provide hospitable on-level services and goods without harming current and possible future resources.

According to Smartvatten (2019), today's customers support companies that share their values. Travelers are increasingly seeking out eco-friendly travel options, and some are even willing to pay extra to support a hotel's sustainability program. According to booking.com (2018), 68% of global travellers intend to stay at an ecological accommodation in 2018.

As world and people are becoming more and more sustainable, so do different hotels, every one of them, never mind the name or brand are trying to contribute into sustainability way of living and operating. According to European Commissions (2016), the main environmental aspects and associated environmental pressures arising from tourism services are presented in the table below. These environmental aspects were selected as the most relevant in the sector. However, the environmental aspects to be managed by specific organisations should be assessed on a case by case basis.

OVERVIEW OF THE TOURISM SECTOR VALUE CHAIN

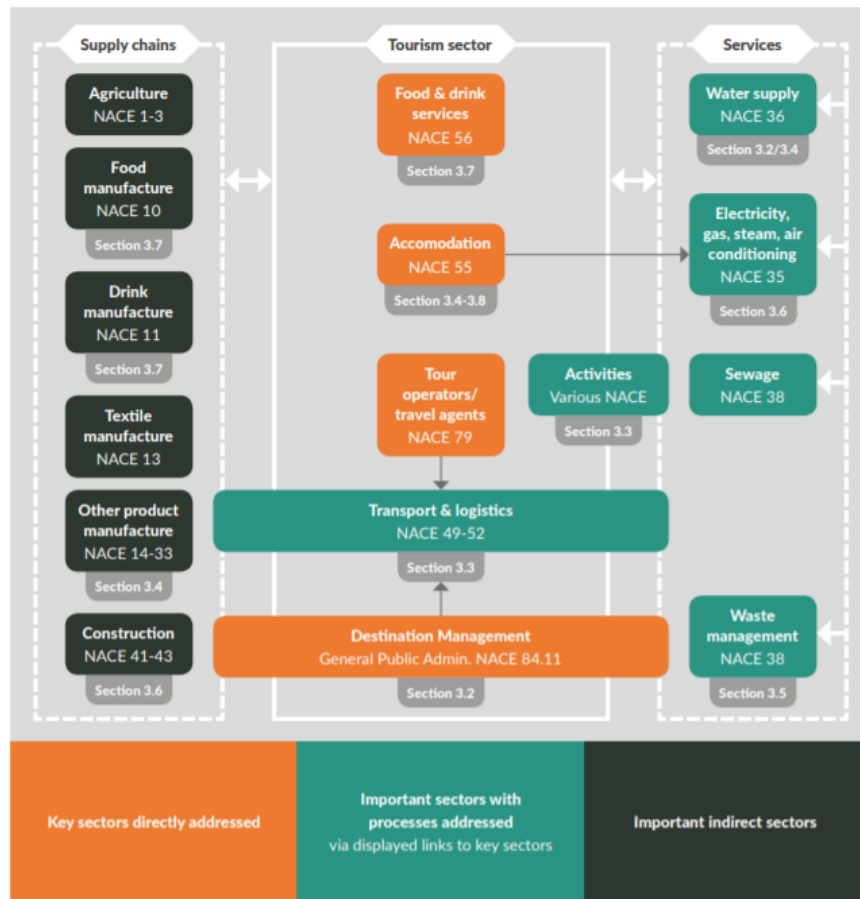


Figure 1. Overview of the tourism sector value chain (Smartvatten 2019)

As could be seen on figure 1, Supply chain, Tourism sector and Services are shaping one communicating structure. In each zone all main consistencies and resources are briefly described. Supply chain specifies tangible products that are provided to hospitality asset. Tourism sector defines multiple services and products that are presented to guests. Services conveys intangible good and services provided to hospitality for their daily operations. This figure is a good representation of how multiple things can be dependent from each other. The information from it will be used in this work later to divide different aspects of sustainable hospitality for best understanding of the topic.

Later in research of European Commission (2016) one can see a table dividing services in hospitality, main environmental aspects used in its (services) performance and main environmental pressures occurring.

All in all, one can allocate several main cases in hospitality services:

- Energy consumption

- Water consumption and waste
- Materials consumption and waste (mainly paper)

(European Commission 2016)

These cases are applicable to every hospitality asset decided to go greener and have several possible decisions, which will be discussed below. According to Smartvatten (2019), automatic energy consumption monitoring can be one of the keys for solving problem with electricity and energy using in general. Persistently monitoring your energy consumption is an answer for improving a hotel's sustainability, since it will let you know precisely how, when, and where energy waste happens so you can make the essential changes.

One more sustainable suggestion, which can be implemented in any hotel going “greener” is energy efficient light bulbs. According to a Smartvatten survey (2019), 75% of European hotels already use energy efficient light bulbs to manage their consumption. This kind of bulbs use at least 75% less energy than incandescent lighting.

What is more, one can also use lightning with timer motion detectors. This system works by ensuring hotel guests they will not accidentally leave the room with lights on. This can help save light power and shorten electricity bill as well. One of the great examples of energy saving working in practice is hotel Stradhalle in Vien. According to their website, they are using LED light lamps inside the rooms to save energy in the building, as well as photovoltaic panels allow them to produce their own, clean electricity all year (Stradhalle 2020).

Another decision for energy saving, and short energy consuming is use nature-produced energy such as windmills, solar panels and energy saving batteries. For example, Six Senses Fiji Hotel resort and residence was designed to be 100 % solar powered. (Six Senses Fiji 2020). As hotel is situated at Nadi (Viti Levu), Fiji, it is gaining a huge amount of sunlight. According to Weather & Climate research (2019), the average amount of sun hour per months for this location is 230. That brings us to average annual amount of 2540 sun hours. Using their location wisely, Six Senses Fiji adapted to their circumstances with usage of solar panels and tesla batteries, which allowed them to run 100 % of operations using only natural energy (Six Senses Fiji 2020).

Second great case every hotel, decided to do a sustainable path, is solving - is water consumption and waste. Water waste can be solved by installing eco-friendly washing machines and dishwashers, as far as they are consuming 15-20% of all water usage in hotel. According to Smartvatten, many sustainable hotels use dishwashers and laundry systems that are specifically designed to conserve water. Eliminating the need for hot water and reducing dry times will result in major electrical and water consumption savings. (Smartvatten 2019).

One of the most sustainable ways of washing is by a xerox washing machine, made specially for hotel industry. One of representatives of xerox machines is Hydrofinitiy System with XOrb™ technology, which cuts water use by up to 80% as well as energy use by 50%, as stated by Hydrofinitiy (2016).

As declared by Hydrofinitiy (2016), instead of relying on hot water & harsh chemicals, their washers use innovative spheres called XOrbs™, alongside industry-approved chemicals. XOrbs™ gently massage fabrics and absorb dirt and use up to 80% less water per load than conventional machines. One of successful use of Hydrofinitiy machines and examples of water saving technique is Hilton Los Angeles Universal City Hotel, which is now uses 76% less water in their laundry. (Hydrofinitiy 2018)

Next important step for every hotel going greener is to maintain and short their waste and especially paper usage. Waste management is one of the crucial factors of environmental sustainability since it is not only about what hotels use from environment but also about what they are throwing back into it. One of the best solutions for eco-hotels can be waste management and recycling program. According to Smartvatten (2019), the average hotel guest generates about 1 kg of waste per night. 72% of the hotels surveyed for a Smartvatten report had already implemented a waste management and/or recycling program. Using refillable dispensers for guest amenities instead of plastic bottles is also a great way to eliminate waste at the source, reduce operating costs, and save time. (Smartvatten 2019)

One of the hotels which is already using these techniques is QO Amsterdam. Instead of leaving small complementary shampoos and conditioners in rooms, they decided to put big refillable bottles of shampoo, conditioner, various soaps, and hand/body lotions made specifically for the hotel by Zenology company with unique QO aroma. (Zenology 2020)

When interviewing QO housekeeping supervisor Grisel Pinto (15 November 2019), she stated: What is for paper waste, partly or full replacement with technology sources like pdf or dox can be helpful. Instead of signing paper sheets of contracts, one can sign them using pdf redactor. Everything that could be done/carried digitally, must be done so. If it is not yet possible to eliminate paper usage completely, one can use recycled paper and after use separate it into paper waste container, so the used paper will be recycled again. For instance, in the QO Hotel Amsterdam every paper needs to be signed is done digitally through tablets, email or pdf files. It requires to shorten paper usage, and as well waste dramatically. For same reason of putting short paper waste, iPads were implemented into rooms. There guests can find all needed timetables, menu, and many more options, which traditionally were put on paper.

### **3.2 Luxury in hospitality**

Nowadays people imagine that every decent hotel with on level services can present itself as luxury one. Hotels all around the world that are associated with places of “grand dames” – bygone or lost era when grand hotels were associated with luxury, glamour, and wealth. The concept of luxury in its true sense came from France and in 2010 French Tourism Office bequeath this title on establishments that met certain criteria. Sometimes people can confuse a luxury hotel and 5-star one. (EHL 2020)

According to Horwath HTL (2011) luxury hotel is defined based on high price but also with reference to a redefinition of “ultra-luxury” as “back to basics” with a focus on authenticity, establishing real one-on-one relationships, the importance of service and personalization, as well as the value and uniqueness offered through artistic design and craftsmanship, use of celebrated artists; and quality in all things.

The Forbes Travel Guide (2020), independent evaluation journal, defines “elements of luxury” as one of their main appraisal criteria. According to Chris Fradin, Vice President Europe for the Forbes Travel Guide, these are “principles that reflect detailed attention regarding the level of extravagant comfort, decisions and convenience provided.” According to EHL (2020) luxury, can be found in a small thing such as creating a meaningful experience or showing one’s care. Nevertheless, big, or small, it should create an emotional connection with people, the product, and the brand.

“What is more, in luxury, things can be more powerful than words: service, a view, something you don't expect, something more than you'd expected - It's the 'wow!' factor that goes beyond expectations and can be translated into a number of things, in many different ways,” says Sébastien Chebaiki, from guest relations department at Hôtel Plaza Athénée in Paris. “It can be as simple as cleaning the guest's glasses during turndown or replacing the empty chewing gum box in a guest's car. Creating a “wow!” factor certainly depends on the situation”, he continues. “It will be specific to each individual guest based on their expectations, habits, culture, background, etc...” (EHL 2020)

Whereas Xotels (2020) defines luxury hotel as the one providing specific luxurious accommodation experience. Luxury hotel status does not depend on number of stars it has, just on level and/or quality of services provided. There are several of characteristics that a luxury hotel should feature:

- Easy and simple booking process.
- The rooms offered is exactly what a guest wanted (in terms of category, size, classification, view, etc.).
- Amazing service. Guest should get a feeling that they are known and valued.
- Aesthetics designer interiors with luxury features.

Everything in the customer's journey regarding luxury hotel should be smooth and easy, guests need to feel that they are welcome and appreciated both directly (for example: said or written) and non-directly (for example: energetically or subconsciously). In 2008 two research Mason, Roberts carry out research to measure travellers' satisfaction with booking process. During their research, 224 guests in two hotels in New Zealand were asked about their experiences when making hotel reservations. The results of a quantitative analysis show that many travellers do find the process of booking accommodation uncomfortable and stressful. Fifty-five percent of guests expressed dissatisfaction with some aspect of the booking process. Therefore, over-complicated booking process could give guest a feeling of not being desirable or expecting a sour service based on an unpleasant booking process. What is more, a booking procedure as well as a front desk – is the first detail of the hotel that guest sees, therefore, a luxury hotel, providing such services, would want to make booking mechanism maximum as simple and smooth as possible. By doing such, a hotel gives guest a subconscious impression or feeling that all its (hotel) experience will be as untroubling and pleasant as booking was.

As mentioned before, one of foundation stones of luxury hotel services is simplicity and smoothness. The less disturbances customer meets during first service points, the more it guarantees the meeting of actual level and stated level of quality. Room is the main place where the guest is expected to spend most time during their stay. Therefore, it is logical that satisfaction in the room and its amenities forms most part of overall satisfaction with a hotel. This is confirmed by (Cronin & Taylor 1992) opinion that customers' perceptions of satisfaction are mostly dependent on the factors of room quality, hotel facilities, room amenities and quality of staff service, resulting in repeat customers and favourable word-of-mouth exchanges. Moreover, every experience connected to the room (like booking process, check in, check out, room viewing, room state, room service etc.) is adding into complete room experience.

One more important point of luxury service is interaction in personal level. Atmosphere, created by hotel staff is ought to be welcoming and special, to give a feeling of a caring staff to a guest. This atmosphere is created by devoted behaviour of staff, the way guest is welcomed, seen off or served, approach of their requests executed. According to Andaleeb and Conway (2006), specific behaviours, including the behaviour of service employees, are the key determinants of perceived service quality and of consumer satisfaction. Keng, Huang & Zheng (2007) discovered that a personal interaction encounters and physical environmental interaction encounters positively influence customer experiential value.

For example, one of most popular rules of behaviour with guests in hotels is 10-5-3 feet method, first put into practice by Jeroen Quint, the general manager of Hotel Irvine in Orange County, California. It states that when approached by guest or approaching one, at 10 feet between you and them you must look up from what you are doing, and acknowledge the customer with direct eye contact and a nod, at 5 feet smile with your lips and eyes and at 3 feet verbally greet the customer and offer a time-of-day greeting (for example: "Good Morning"). This rule is applicable for all hotel employees, especially to front office and housekeeping, as they encounter guests the most. It is not simply common sense to approach your clients with respect, it is it is downright savvy marketing. With such a great amount of rivalry in the marketplace today, you and your workers can give your organization a distinct advantage by creating the additional benefit of being a friendly place to do business. (Entrepreneur 2014)

What is more, to create caring and valued atmosphere, housekeeping employees, getting room service requests, must try their best to complete them in shortest time possible.

Room attendants are ought to clean rooms in standard given time with minimal inconvenience to the guest. All services provided must be complete in caring and thoughtful behaviour. Luxury service physically and emotionally should be meeting the client's needs. This is why the caring factor makes all the difference in how the client will perceive the experience. (Cavitt, 2008)

For example, this customer approach is used in QO Amsterdam Hotel. All employees never mind their position or job is using 10-5-3 method in their daily job. What is more, housekeeping employees after executing guest's request is insuring, they do not need anything else, and if they do, housekeeping member is providing needed good or service. All requests are done in shortest time possible. Room attendants are cleaning rooms in given time depending on their (rooms) type and kind. All operations are carrying out with quality and speed and positive attitude. (Pinto, 15 November 2019)

The essential element of luxury that can be added to ones mentioned before is aesthetics and style. Website Xotels (2020) indicate such features for luxury hotel room: great decorations, costly touches, thoughtfulness in aesthetic details, a peaceful room with fresh air, robes and slippers, sufficient storage, holders, work area, reading chair, safe, great size flat-screen TV, iPhone/iPod dock, coffee maker, good-length mirror, compelling warming/AC system and a King bed with a decent mattress, high-quality sheets and an assortment of pillow types (or a cushion menu). (Xotels 2020)

Successful fitting in those criteria can be seen on QO Amsterdam Hotel example. According to QO (2018), the hotel was working with professionals to create perfect mix of luxury and sustainability. As stated in QO chapter, two different architects brought the hotel to life. They worked cooperatively to connect two distinct lines and make one of Europe's most sustainable hotels. This allowed QO to design unique look both inside and outside the hotel and to create memorable aesthetics style.

Besides the design, QO also satisfies Xotels criteria on room planning. In quarter suites or suites room types guests can also enjoy separate sinks (if staying in pairs or in number of 3 / 4 person). Guests can also enjoy different amenities, as well as bathtub with sea salt in addition. (Pinto, 15 November 2019)

### **3.3 Customer awareness in hospitality**

Cleverism journal (2020) in its article defines customer awareness as a process that helps an entrepreneur educate customers about his/her company, its performances and the products or services his/her company delivers. Customer awareness helps instruct current customers about one's activities, yet in addition attract new ones, who discover these activities interesting. Customer awareness is a piece of advertising procedures, applied in each business organization, which wants to be recognizable and well-known.

Among different sorts of promoting, there are two most commonly utilized methods of how advertising and customer awareness can be executed: external marketing (outside company, though advertisement and social media) and internal marketing (inside, through its employees and info plates). With increased use of technology, most percentage of outside marketing is done via internet and its social media. Social media is an effective way of marketing as it is where nowadays people spend most of their time. According to Inbound marketing Inc website (2020), social media sites are a natural extension of one's hotel's website, they should provide guests with helpful information that will contribute to an overall great stay.

For example, one can consider posting fun trivia facts about their destination to get guests excited about an upcoming visit. Hotels can likewise create a buzz with social media contests. Encourage customers to connect with one's pages and offer free rewards or incentives for attendance (Inbound marketing Inc 2020).

As statistic shows, there are 3,5 billion social media users worldwide. It makes around 45% of current Earth population (Oberlo website 2020). The more amount people are monitoring social media that one is using to promote their company, the higher is the chance of increasing customer awareness.

## Number of people using social media platforms

Estimates correspond to monthly active users (MAUs). Facebook, for example, measures MAUs as users that have logged in during the past 30 days. See source for more details.

Our World  
in Data

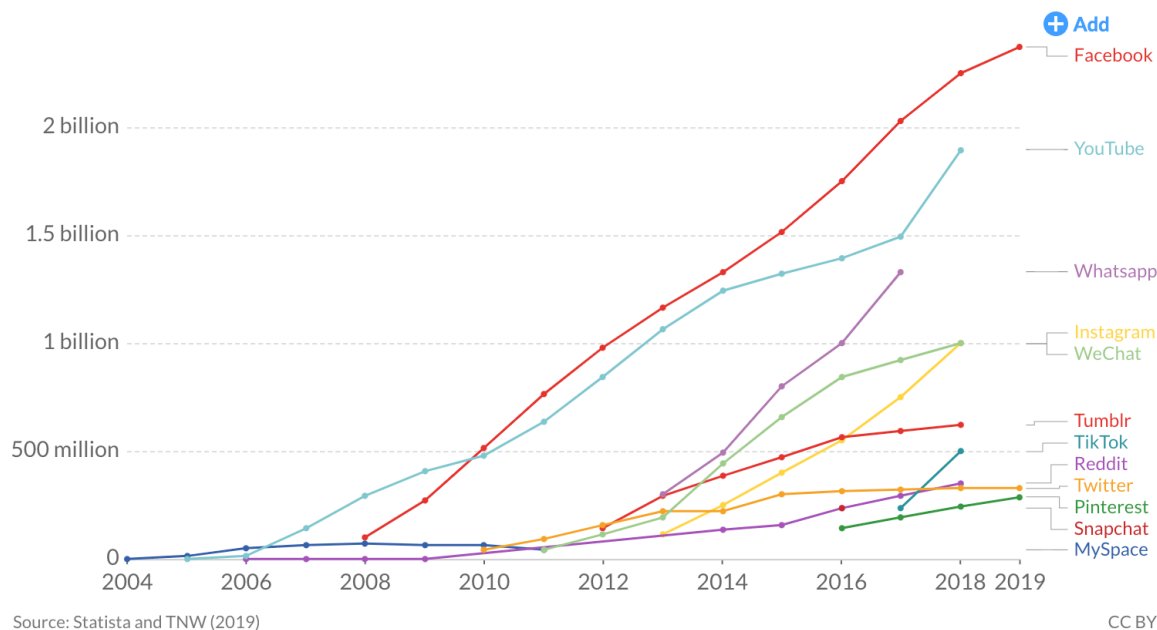


Figure 2: Number of people using SM platforms (Smart Insights 2020)

Figure 2 shows amount of people using social media platforms by the spin of 15 years. As can be seen from the graph, the most popular platform with biggest number of users is Facebook. Gnuworld website (2020) in their research about best social media marketing platform agrees that Facebook is still the best option for advertising and marketing. What is more, Facebook has targeting options, means that one can select which target audience will see their advertisement, therefore, illuminate possibility of wasting time and revenue on non-interested users. (Gnuworld 2020)

Second popular social media is YouTube, as can be seen from the graph. YouTube is a video platform; therefore, it is most convenient to post one's advertisements there. YouTube is also using "suggested to you" algorithms based on person's interests and sometimes on their age. One can use that if age and interests of target group is known, for example, eco travellers in their thirties.

Last but not least most popular social media is Instagram. It reached a peak of 1 billion of monthly users, 500 million of which use platform every day. According to Facebook research (2019), 83% of Instagram users said they discovered new services and products on this platform. What is more, same research shows that Instagram has a strong impact

on people's shopping journey: Instagram algorithms help users to decide whether to buy services or not with 80% success of purchasing. (Oberlo research 2020)

Though marketing and raising customer awareness outside hotel is good way to go, inside hotel awareness can be also crucial, as no one can 100% guarantees that every guest, who books a room in a hotel, went through hotel's website or any of its social medias before visit. One can encounter a lot of business travellers in a hotel, whose rooms were booked for them by company, therefore, there is a high present that the actual guest do not know anything about the hotel or its actions at all. That is why it is so important to maintain internal marketing or internal customer awareness in hotels.

According to Varun and Indu (2015), internal marketing is based on the self-reinforcing relationship between employee and customer satisfaction ("take care of the employees and they will take care of the customers"), in other words, employer is hiring people dedicated to the hotel's idea, educate them and let them educate guests about the hotel. Such practice can be seen in many hotels where guest receive all information from the front desk, but some hotels took a step further in this model and started to educate all the stuff from every department.

For example, QO Amsterdam Hotel is carrying out daily educational presentations about hotel's sustainable actions to housekeeping and public area staff members. By doing such, the hotel is ensuring not only employee's awareness, but possible guests' knowledge too. Therefore, if guest will approach them with a question, they can provide them with useful information. (Pinto, 15 November 2019)

Nevertheless, with very educated staff members, no hotel can escape unsociable or tired guests. If such guest is entering a hotel, due to their drained state they will receive minimum amount of information, because of their demure behaviour, they will decrease their contact with staff members, therefore, gain little knowledge about the hotel. In such case, some hotels are placing several informational sources inside the room, for example brochures or info tags.

One of good example of such actions can be seen on illustration of Voco hotel. They are placing informational brochures inside their rooms to raise inner customer awareness

about their sustainable actions (image 10), material that they use in their rooms (as can be seen on image 9) and how guests can be a part of it.

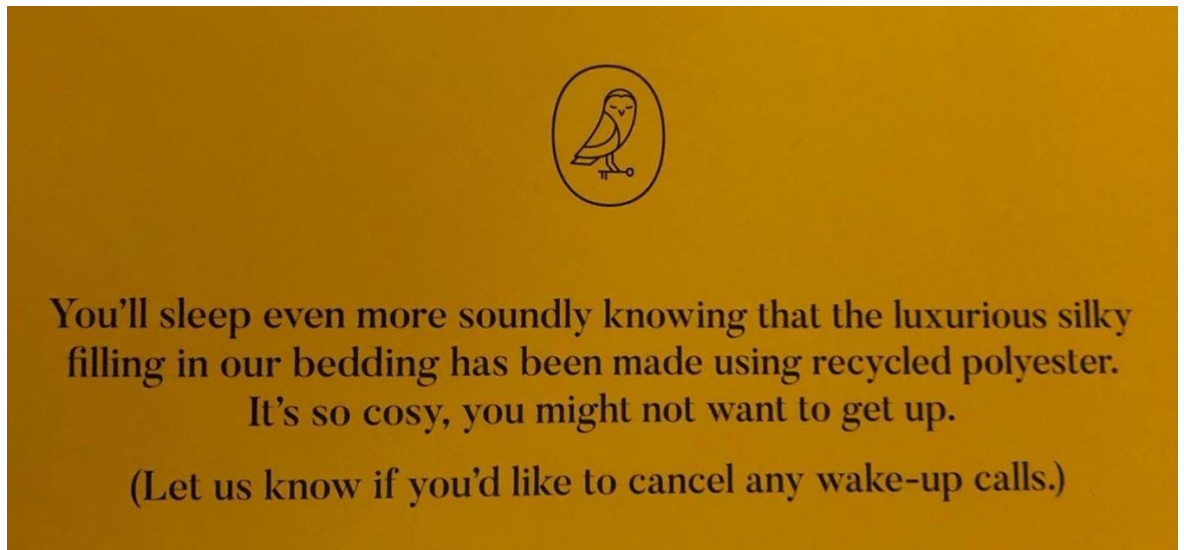


Image 9. Voco informational brochure (Voco hotel brochures 2020)



Image 10. Informational brochure from Voco hotel (Voco hotel brochures 2020)

## **4 Method and data collection**

Objectives of thesis are to find ways of raising inner customer awareness of QO Hotel Amsterdam without disrupting its luxury style and sustainable beliefs. This chapter is focusing on methods and ways of how data about guests' awareness was collected. As an approach, quantitative research was chosen with survey and observation practice as methods of accomplishing it. As it is unknown, how guests get information inside the hotel, quantitative research was done in order to understand which present of customers actually know about QO's actions and from which sources.

Due to unexpected circumstances connected with COVID-19 situation, interfered with data collection, for the moment of analysing compiled data, I have had only limited amount of 30 answers done by new employees only. As the current situation in the world does not leave the possibility of continuing data collection on upcoming employees (due to the reason that there are none of them) or testing it on guests, analysis is made based on already available answers and my personal observations as a housekeeping employee. After data collection, the analysis was done in the interest of coming up with most effective methods and suggestions of how inner customer awareness can be raised.

### **4.1 Methods chosen**

Method chosen for collecting data was quantitative research. This method was chosen in order to understand percentage of guests getting information from existing sources and for further comprehension of ways to raise inner customer awareness.

Quantitative research is an approach to understanding how and why humans think and act the way we do. This type of research is helping to comprehend human behaviour in its regular settings, and give detailed explanation of reasons and consequences of it (behaviour). (Nardi 2014)

Referring to SnapSurveys (2011): Quantitative Research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables – and generalize results from a larger sample population. Quantitative Research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research. Quantitative data collection methods are much more structured than Qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data collection methods include various forms of surveys – online surveys, paper surveys, mobile surveys and kiosk surveys, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, longitudinal studies, website interceptors, online polls, and systematic observations.

In this thesis such methods as online survey and observation are used. These methods were chosen because they were most convenient and would provide needed feedback faster than any of others. More detail description of these methods and their pros and cons would be discussed below:

Survey method is focusing on collecting data by asking pre-designed questions to people who are thought or expected to have desired information. The goal of a good survey is to utilize available resources so as to gather the most accurate information possible (Lavarakas 2008). Survey can be done personally, by handing out papers with questionnaire to people, and digitally. Digital way is more convenient, because in difference from paper surveys, it cannot be lost, and person can answer all needed question in their own time. Surveys completed by several number of people can provide insights into people's average awareness or opinion of anything. It can also allow analysist to carry out their research in short time (in difference from ethnographic research) and with limited resources (in controversy from focus groups research). Online survey method is using same tools as any survey, though, is carried in online format.

Survey method in this work was chosen to observe the hotel from new coming guest's point of view and test if current customer awareness channels are effective enough. Survey is a quantitative a tool in this work, because questions were designed to find out customers' opinion and measure their behaviour in standard setting. Survey was designed to detect weak and strong point in current system, as well as inspect real amount of data received on average by a consumer. This method allowed author to compare her observations of inner functioning with ideals set by the hotel and real outcomes, experienced by interviewees.

Survey method has some advantages and disadvantages. In one hand, among these pluses are:

- It is easy to do and quick to create
- It has a wide reach
- It saves one's money on research costs
- One can do it via mail, email, online, telephone, and verbal methods
- It can quickly show analysist trends in the market
- It gathers large and significant data

In other hand, survey method has some minuses:

- Survey fatigue could lead to response bias

- Making the wrong questions can lead to inaccurate data
- Respondents may skip answers or quit in the middle of a survey
- Not the best method to use to gather info on a controversial topic
- The answers one provides must reflect the possible answers of the respondents
- No possibility of reading body language or asking additional questions

(Si 2020)

Observation method was also convenient and easy to carry out due to the reason. During my thesis writing, I was working as a housekeeping employee in my case hotel. Therefore, I saw all services and operations from inside.

Observation can be accomplished not only visually but also through the other senses. A researcher with visual challenges could draw on his consistent auditory skills, his sense of touch, and his sense of smell to provide new and insightful descriptions of a particular setting. (Marshall, Rossman 2016)

Aim of observation method in this study was to observe all operations from inside, to define functions of departments in work and determine possible effective places of implementing sources of customer awareness. As I was working in the hotel for some time, it was beneficial to observe overall guests' behaviour towards Persijn, J&K and rooms, examine customers' and employees' point of attention in mentioned locations. Observation method was effective both to understand where and how should customer awareness suggestion be realized with most success and least disturbance of guests or QO's image and believes.

Observation is a beneficial way of doing research as an analyst can see company with their own eyes, finding answers for their own questions and see company for what is really is. Through my observation practices, I was noticing not only strong points, but also weak ones and acknowledging points that can be improved.

Observation survey also have several pros and cons:

Pros:

- Observation can help by offering a real-world aspect to a hypothesis. It offers a better description of consumer behaviour.
- Observation allows you to create and observe actual situations. Instead of using data to try and predict consumer reaction.
- This technique is ideal for situations in which nonverbal communication is important for a complete consumer profile.

Cons:

- Observation research can include a high degree of researcher bias.
- Observation research does not always return an accurate demographic sample.
- The method also relies on the interpretation of observation.
- Observation only tells one part of the story. Attitudes and opinions cannot be clearly expressed only through actions, so it may not be the clearest picture possible.

(Srivastava 2019)

As a tool of observation, I also used benchmarking technique to recognize ways of other hotels' operations and apply my findings to solving QO's case. Benchmarking method is an important tool to this thesis, because some further suggestions will be done with use of this approach. Benchmarking is a procedure of estimating the performance of an organization's products, administrations, or procedures against those of another business viewed as the "best in the class". The purpose of benchmarking is to recognize internal opportunities for development. By studying organizations with superior performance, separating what makes such superior performance possible, and afterward comparing those procedures with how your business operates, you can actualize changes that will yield significant improvements. (Shopify 2020)

These two methods were chosen due to being most convenient in circumstances of limited time and resources, as well as most fitting for the aim of gaining data easy and quickly. Observation method was easy to carry out because it was not demanding to do something outstanding or over complicated. As for survey method, it was easy to implement in busy hotel schedule without interrupting and/or disturbing any of its operations, employees, or guests. What is more, survey is easy and fast to complete, and in current circumstances of limited travelling due to the virus, it is a convenient way of keeping getting results without any significant losses.

Comparing chosen methods with other ones, first ones are rather fast and easy way of collecting information. Survey method completed in digital form is more convenient approach than one-to-one interview. Interview typically lasts longer and can be more disturbing for employees or guests, as they will have to find convenient time for it in their tight schedule. Online survey can be done in person's most available moment without disturbing or extra time needed. Chosen methods are also more advantageous in comparison with focus groups technique, implementation of which needs more resources. In situation

with limited assets (such as: time, money, people's quantity, etc.), chosen practices are fitting better.

## 4.2 Reliability of research

When discussing any sort of research, it is likewise critical to mention reliability. For research to be reliable it should communicate that on the off chance that it was cultivated on a comparable gathering of interviewees in a similar to setting (by any definition), then akin results would be found. (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007)

Eisner (1991, 58) says that although the concept of reliability is mostly used for measurement and appraisal of quantitative research, it can be applied to all kinds of research. On the off chance that we distinguish testing as a method of data elicitation, at that point the most significant trial of any quantitative investigation is its quality. A decent subjective investigation can enable us "to comprehend a circumstance that would some way or another be cryptic or confounding".

To sum up, reliability of any research means that the analysis was neutral, not inducing the responder to any specific answer, and in case of repeated realization, would give results more or less similar to the original ones.

As a part of introductory training, QO are organizing "guest experience" night for its new employees. "Guest experience" is a service provided by QO to any new company member for them to see hotel from inside, test its service and understand aims of their work (to bring guests as amazing service as they experienced) and to see everything from customer's point of view. During "guest experience" new staff members are spending a night in one of QO's rooms, enjoying all its amenities and services wanted, have a breakfast upcoming morning in the hotel's restaurant Persijn with Dutch cuisine and have their complimentary drinks at same evening in the hotel's bar J&K.

New employees are considered the one who passed their job interviews successfully and after introductory training will be full-time or part-time workers. Before introduction trainings new company member is not familiar with any inner resources of gaining information (colleagues, informational emails, presentations with data, etc.), they have access to public sources only ( f.e. company's Instagram, website, etc.). Hence, new employees, gaining their "customer experience" are equal in awareness level to newcomer guests.

It was decided to test out survey on new employees during their introduction training and “guest experience”, because it was easier and less disturbing for hotel and its guests.

Because of constant and non-changing amount of info in QO public sources, data there will make new employees interviewed more or less equally aware about QO as already surveyed colleagues before them. As the hotel did not change their inner customer awareness methods yet, same level of knowledge about the hotel, as gained by previous respondents, will be received by new ones. By reason of non-changing factors mentioned before, if the survey is to be executed again, it will give more or less same results as the present one. Due to all reasons discussed above, my research can be considered reliable.

Survey was launched in January 2020, and until May 2020 collected overall of 30 responses from three different groups of new employees. As overall number of responses are only 30, I cannot draw any wide-reaching conclusions from the results, however, they (results) will at least indicate certain tendencies and patterns among each other, which can overlapping from aspects noticed while observation process. Survey questions can be found in Appendix 1.

## 5 Results

Results in this part are based on analysis done in following chapter. Outcomes from data analysed, show that QO hotel is lacking inner customer awareness about their sustainability actions. The hotel has several info sources that they have been using, such as: Front office, Persijn, J&K and regular employees, and iPad in rooms. Nevertheless, the survey proved my theory that these sources are not enough, and in certain circumstances the information can be missed by a customer. Of course, no one can guarantee 100% of customers to be fully aware, but it is quite real to make those info sources more effective and to rise present of aware guests.

In a situation when the guest is arriving late to the hotel and he/she is visibly tired, he/she is not likely to receive any sustainable info from front office employee ( because it will be considered not relevant to tell to the tired guest and will be seen as a detain factor in such situation), in the room the tired guests is likely to use iPad for façade, lights or tv control. It happens because tired people are most likely to shorten our way to get to rest or to sleep. If not visiting J&K and staying only for one night, the last source from which guest can receive information is Persijn employee. Nevertheless, in a busy morning every person in restaurant is needed in working mode, and no one can choose information over productivity, therefore, nobody can guarantee 100% that guest will receive any info from these sources in applied circumstances. All aspects shown above are relevant to “personal factors”. No one of us are robots and can evenly manage in stressful or busy situations with high productivity. Sometimes, when situation is aligning negatively towards customer awareness, unfortunately, it can be missed for a guest completely.

As analysis shown, the previous system of guest awareness, mostly relied on face-to-face communication and in room iPads, does not meet QO’s expectations to be as effective as they would like to. Analysis shown that before their visit, guests are mostly visiting QO’s website. Nevertheless, the information listed there (on website) about the hotel’s sustainable actions, most present of guests consider QO more modern (22%), luxury (17%) and interesting (17%) than sustainable (14%). That signifies that the greatest number of guests who are looking through the hotel’s website are not visiting “About QO” tab or does not even know that it exists, which results in low external customer awareness.

For the same reason it can be assumed that on current moment QO is chosen because of its modernity, luxury and for being interesting more, than for being a sustainable hotel, which is a drawback, due to the reason that the hotel wants to be recognized as luxury

and sustainable equally. Analysis showed that all in all guests are familiar with the definition of sustainability and third of them (33.3%) see it as a personal responsibility, therefore, guests are mostly interested in this topic and as overall awareness raised, they are likely to know more during their stay.

Study showed that the greatest number of interviewees asked were using in room tablet to control Façade and TV (33%), and to control Façade, use TV and order food (30%). Use of iPad for reasons mentioned above, as well as for discovering more about QO was shown only by 26.7% of guests. According to the results, only 30% of respondents opened "About QO" tab.

In conclusion, all facts mentioned above leads to the verdict that current methods of internal customer awareness are not effective enough. QO chose correct methods of raising customer awareness (f.e. writing information in Persijn menu or communication with staff), as analysis showed that 60% of guests registered gaining useful info from staff members, though these approaches are simply not enough and in a difficult situation (like the one with a tired guest) can be not effective at all. What is more, it was proven that if the guest is not interfering with the information face to face, he/she is not likely to remember any of it. This is proven by the high number of interviewees aware about Greenhouse (65,2%), as it was written in Persijn menu.

To crown it all, considering everything specified above, the results of analysis are: QO is lacking internal customer awareness. The present system that they have can be effective in certain circumstances (f.e. low season, not tired guests, not stressful time, etc.) but cannot be proved as compelling in other terms. Ongoing methods and approach QO are using are legitimate and useful, however they are not enough to provide all guests with equal capacity of awareness in every type of situation. Furthermore, present sources are not confronting customer with the information, leaving the choice weather to know or not to the customer, and as analysis of iPad question shows, guests mostly choose not to. Confronting, however, is an effective way of raising customer awareness, as earlier proven with the Greenhouse case.

## 6 Data analysis

This chapter will be focused on analysing results of survey method. Survey had 14 questions in total that were agreed with executive housekeeping and my commissioning person. Survey was consisting of 7 closed questions with options and 7 open questions, where interviewees would give their opinion. Survey was done via Google forms service, which provided answers to closed questions with figures, some open questions data was summarized by me and put into charts for reader's better understanding and analysing convenience.

Survey was released on the end of January and was collecting answers till the middle of March, when lockdown and tourists' flow decrease (due to the reasons of COVID-19) started. Till the moment of analyse, the survey collected total of 30 answers, that are analysed below.

1. Which of the following sustainability actions by QO are you familiar with?

30 responses

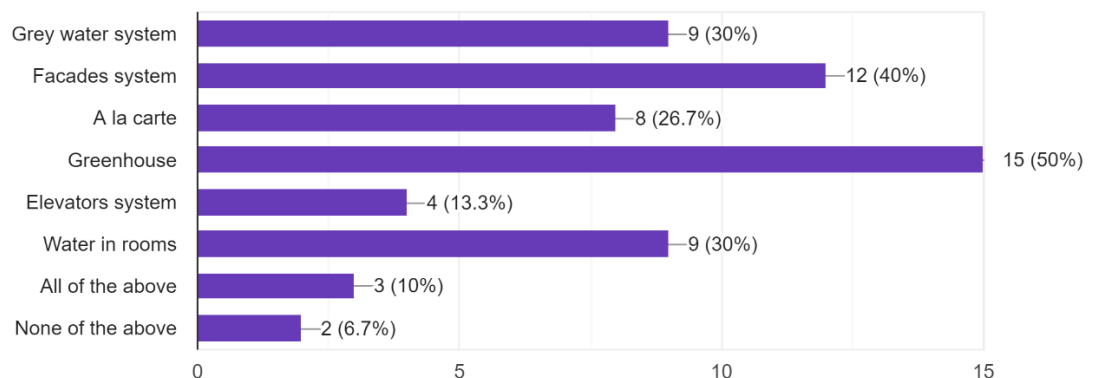


Figure 3. Which of the following sustainability actions by QO are you familiar with? (N=30)

As QO describes itself not only as a luxury hotel, but also as a sustainable one, it was important to know if any of respondents gain any information about QO's sustainable actions before visit. On this stage, interviewees could gain information only from external sources, f.e. website and Instagram, therefore, this question is measuring not only their (respondents) awareness at the beginning of survey, but also what info from social media sources was most memorable for them. Testing this question on actual guests can show their motivation on choosing QO and if it is chosen because of being a sustainable hotel.

As can be seen on figure 3, most familiar sustainable actions to respondents were Greenhouse (with 50% of interviewees awareness), Façade system (with 40%). Grey water system (30%) and location of water in rooms (30%) are situated in the middle of awareness chart. Least familiar sustainable actions, according to the results, are elevator system and a la carte method. Also, 10% of respondents stated to be familiar with all mentioned QO's actions, while 6.7% are declared to be unfamiliar with any.

2. How did you know about them?  
30 responses

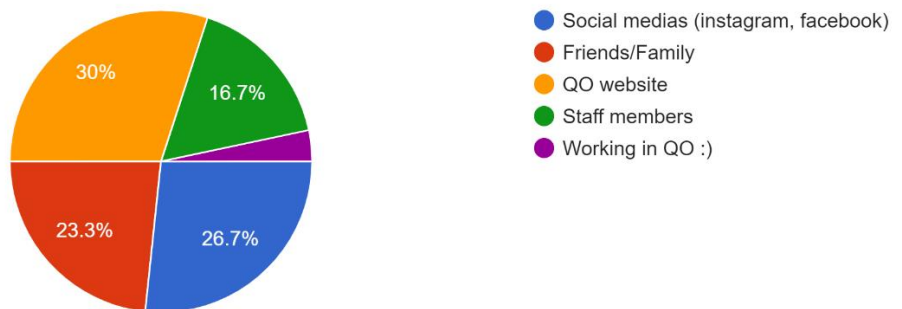


Figure 4. How did you know about them? (N=30)

As can be observed from figure 4, main outside source of information is QO website. Data collected from this question allow one to understand what social media channels (and informational channels all in all) are most effective and visited by future guests. Social media is an important step in customer's journey, as it is the first thing to be seen by guests when first researching about the hotel, therefore, it should reflect main ideas and most important actions of the hotel. If the guests are skipping this part for some reasons or do not explore it enough, then internal information channels there to compensate lack of guest's awareness.

3. What was your opinion about QO before your visit? (choose 3)

30 responses

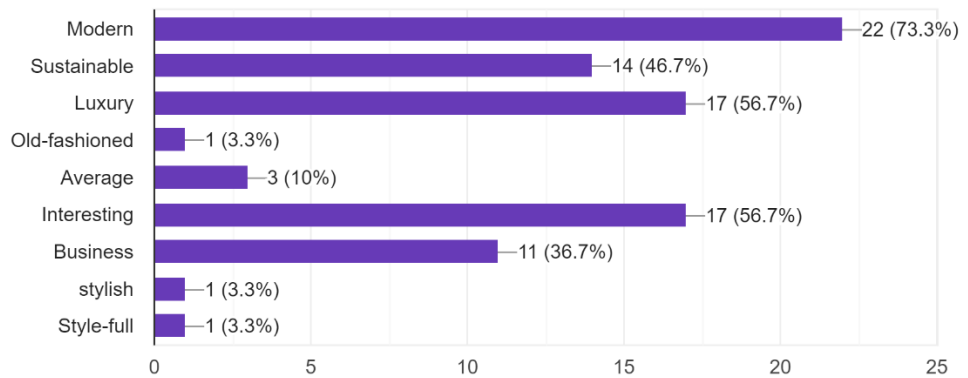


Figure 5. What was your opinion about QO before your visit? (choose 3) (N=30)

Question three (figure 5) was created to measure reasons why guests are choosing QO hotel and their opinion on it before visit. Data from this question also shows guests' expectations and knowledge about the hotel, as well as their motivation to choose it. Guests' opinion on the hotel is coming from their awareness about it, therefore how aware guests about QO's sustainable actions before visit can be seen on figure 5.

Figure 5 shows that the greatest number of respondents considered QO to be modern, luxury and interesting before their visit. Sustainable option is high enough, though not the first to be chosen, therefore, it confirms my assumption that guests coming to stay are not aware of the hotel's sustainable action on the first place, which should be done. According to data from the figure above, QO is clearly seen as modern and luxury hotel, as well as an interesting one to spend a night in, but not as a sustainable one.

Question four (figure 6) was aimed to find respondent's opinion about what sustainability means to them personally. Due to the reason that this question in the survey was open, I summarized all answers and made a pie-chart for more convenient further analyzation.

What sustainability means to you personally?

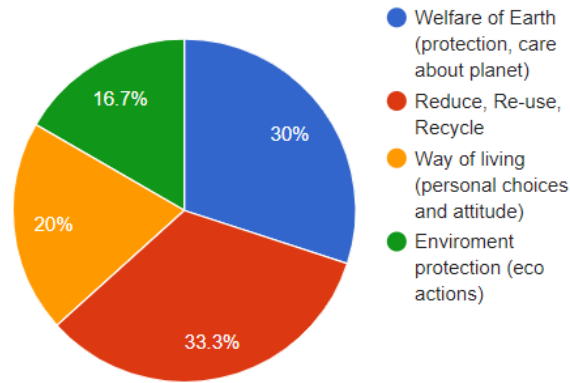


Figure 6. What sustainability means to you personally? (N=30)

This question was designed to measure guests' personal impression and relation to sustainability. If a person takes certain actions to contribute to sustainability in any kind and to eco situation on the planet, they are inclined to notice whether other people' and organizations' are doing the same, and base their choice on it.

As can be seen from figure 6, most respondents see sustainability as personal way of contributing, using "rule of three "R" – to Reduce waste, Re-use things instead of throwing them out and Recycle to make new things. Most interviewees see personal responsibility and use ways to contribute to the eco process. Second biggest believe, believe that sustainability is a protection and welfare of the Earth, done by everyone's choices, decisions, and action, in other words, everybody's responsibility and contribution, from one person to big companies. Concluding from information above, all respondents know what sustainability is and most part of them complete sustainable actions in their daily life.

Did you get any info about QO sustainable actions from Front desk? If yes, what info did you get?

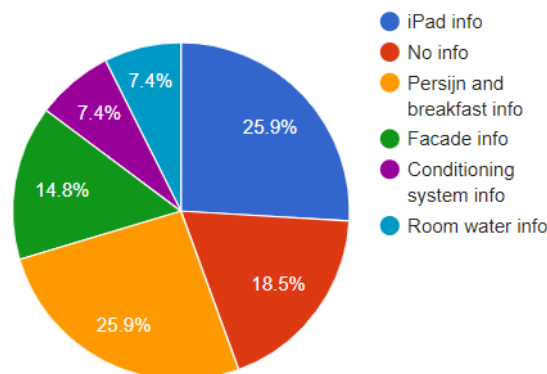


Figure 7. Did you get any info about QO's sustainable actions from Front desk? If yes, what info did you get? (N=30)

Question five was formed to measure effectiveness of the front desk as one of the main awareness channels inside the hotel. During her interview, QO front desk employee Laia EsAr (15 November 2019) mentioned, that first and one of most important things to mention to a checking in guest, is breakfast information (if one is included) as well as information about the in-room iPad through which Facades use and requests can be done.

Information from this interview is confirmed by pie chart (figure 7) data showings: Persijn and breakfast info, and iPad information is sharing the greatest number of respondents' awareness, followed by no awareness. Different sustainable actions highlighted separately for better understanding of guests' awareness and what details they are actually gaining from front office. Façade is one of the "must" to mention in the check-in process, as stated above, as well it is one of the most noticeable part of QO building and its rooms. That can explain the high present of respondents' awareness about it.

Conditioning system info and in-room water are parts of the hotel's sustainable actions, mentioned to some respondents during check-in. According to pie chart, their overall percentage of them (sustainable actions) are 14.8% which is making barely one eighth of overall awareness. This confirms that one of main informational sources mentioned in QO chapter (front office employee, Persijn or J&K employee, info tab in room's iPad and regular hotel employees (housekeeping, room attendants, etc.)) is not completing fully its function to make customers well-aware of the hotel sustainable actions.

#### 6. Did you use the in room tablet?

30 responses

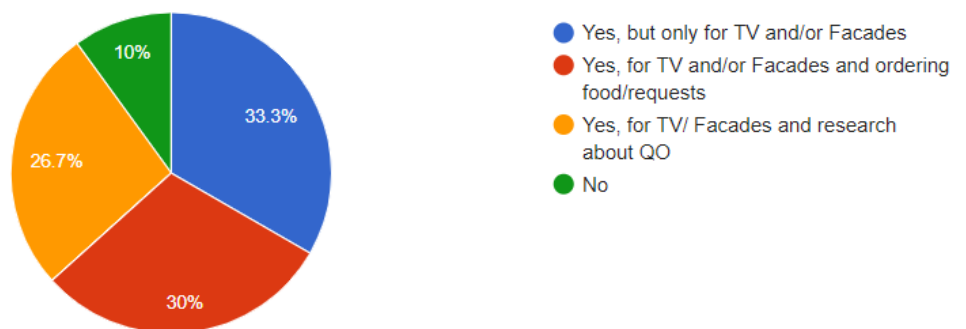


Figure 8. Did you use the in-room tablet? (N=30)

In-room iPad tablet is one of info sources used by the hotel inside the building. With the help of iPads guest can close and open façade panels, control lights and tv remotely, order room service, as well as read about QO and its sustainable actions in "About QO" tab.

For purposes of measuring for what operations customers are using iPads, and if they open QO informational tab, questions six and seven were created.

7. Did you open "Know more about QO" section on tablet?  
30 responses

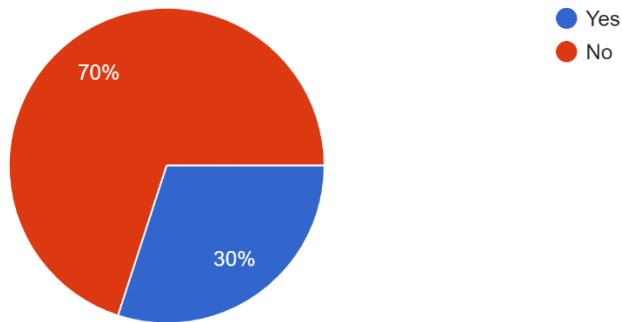


Figure 9. Did you open "Know more about QO" section on tablet? (N=30)

From figure 8 and 9 it can be seen the ratio and distinction between percentage of people who use in-room iPad and who open "About QO" section in it. From figure 9 it can be seen that the suppressing majority of people interviewed did not open QO tab in iPad at all, which means that one more main QO info source is not fully completing its mission and cannot guarantee that guests are becoming more aware of the hotel's actions.

Which info from this section was most interesting/useful for you?

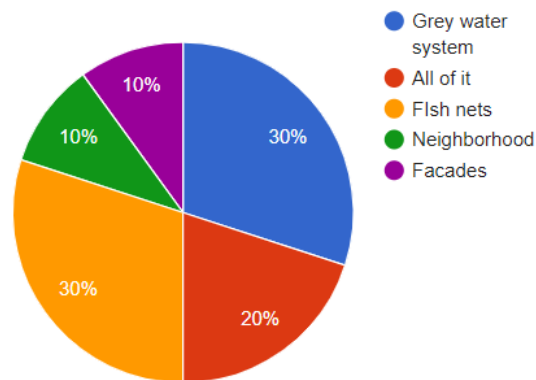


Figure 10. Which info from this section was most interesting/useful for you? (N=30)

Was there something you would like to see in this section?

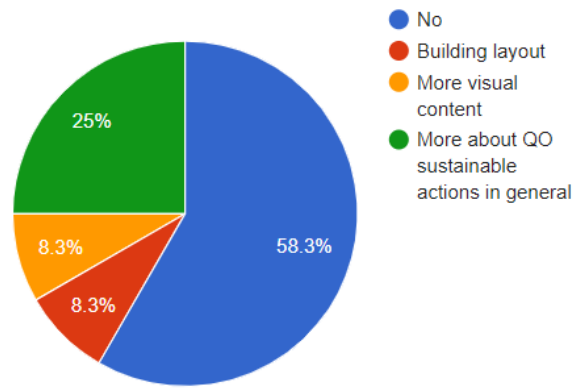


Figure 11. Was there something you would like to see in this section? (N=30)

Questions eight (figure 10) and nine (figure 11) were measuring topics which guests payed attention to and which on their opinion were interesting or, on the other hand, missing from the section. This pie chart (figure 10) shows which parts of QO tab were most interesting to guests, who opened it. Analysing this data, one can understand what info was most memorable for guests and, therefore, what information about QO they will remember even after the visit.

Figure 11 displays that the greatest number of participants were satisfied with the content in QO info tab. Nevertheless, some of them were lacking some more information about the building in general, as well as about other QO's sustainable actions. This certifies that amount of info, presented in the QO page in iPad can be increased.

Did you get any info about sustainability in Persijn while visiting it? If yes, please specify

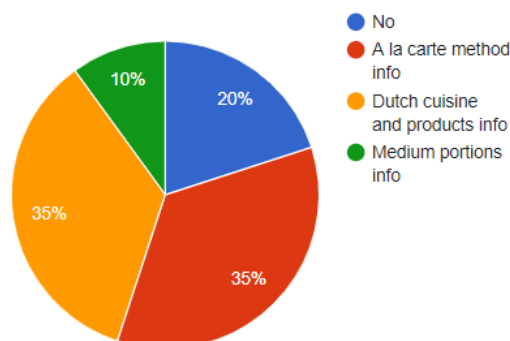


Figure 12. Did you get any info about sustainability in Persijn while visiting it? If yes, please specify. (N=30)

This question (question 10, figure 12) was created to measure if guests are receiving any info from Persijn employees and what this info is about. As can be seen, the greatest number of guests received information about a la carte method as well as about Dutch cuisine in the restaurant and use of local products. According to interview of QO Persijn employee Christina Chishevskaya (15 November 2019), mentioned that all Persijn employees should do storytelling to guests, mentioning local products use, as well as a la carte method.

## GOOD DAY

PERSIJN DUTCH EATERY MEANS PURE, FLAVOURSOME AND SUSTAINABLE DINING IN AMSTERDAM.  
USING NOTHING BUT LOCALLY SOURCED INGREDIENTS, INCLUDING FRESH PRODUCE  
FROM OUR VERY OWN GREENHOUSE, WE SHOW DINERS HOW INNOVATIVE AND AMAZING DUTCH CUISINE CAN BE.  
NO-NONSENSE YET VERSATILE. ENJOY!

Image 11. Persijn March 2020 menu (QO Persijn 2020)

On image 11 one can see following sustainable information, stated in the Persijn menu for March 2020. This information is the only one that can be found in Persijn menu, besides food info. Information stated is telling mostly about local products use, brief information about greenhouse and Dutch cuisine.

Question eleven was created to measure what number of guests are visiting J&K bar during their stay. J&K is situated on 21<sup>st</sup> floor, one floor down from Greenhouse, one of the most noticeable and important sustainable action of the QO. Visiting J&K by guests is highly increases their possible awareness about the Greenhouse, as it is not only well-seen from the bar floor, but herbs and flowers from it is used in J&K bar and Winter garden kitchen.

Results from question eleven showed that the greatest number of guests (70%) did not experience J&K, therefore, their chances to be well-aware about Greenhouse is less, comparing to travellers who visited the bar. For the 70% of guests, who did not visit J&K such informational channels as Persijn, Front office and in room iPads are left.

Question twelve was designed to measure if guests receive any information about the Greenhouse, as it is one of the most important QO sustainable actions. Outcome from this question signifies that the greatest number of guests received information about Greenhouse purposes of growing own herbs, berries, and eatable flowers, which are being used in cooking at Persijn and J&K bar.

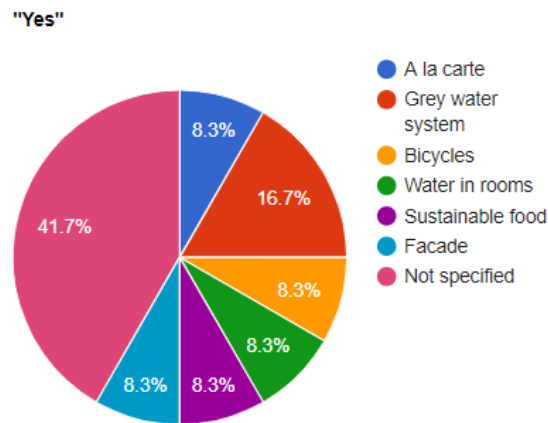


Figure 13. Question thirteen of survey, sorted by "yes" answers (N=30)

Question thirteen of survey was created to check if the overall customer awareness about QO's sustainable actions raised after their stay in the hotel, just like question three was created to measure guests' expectations and opinion about QO before their stay. Results displays most (62,5%) amount of positive answers with 37,5% of negative. On figure 5 one can see that 46,7% of guests marked QO as a sustainable hotel on their opinion, before staying in it. Figure 15 shows that 62,5% learned about QO's sustainable actions, which makes former 46,7% confirm their expectations about QO as a sustainable hotel, and 15,8% discover it for the first time. This analysis shows effectiveness of customer awareness actions done by QO inside the hotel building. Figure 13 was created to show what specific sustainable actions of QO was memorable for customers. This shows which exactly QO sustainable actions were more memorable for customers.

Question fourteen was designed to measure percentage of guests gaining information from employees and colleagues of QO. As results show, 60% guests received useful sustainable information from QO employees, which confirms QO's believe that one-to-one communication is valuable and important.

## 7 Suggestions

Suggestions in this chapter are based on the issues that came up in the survey results and from my own observations and experiences, as well as the ideas that were derived from the benchmarking process (from other hotels implementing sustainability initiatives and communications successfully, which can be seen in theory chapter). Some of suggestions are designed visually for reader's most convenient perception.

(sust. =sustainable)

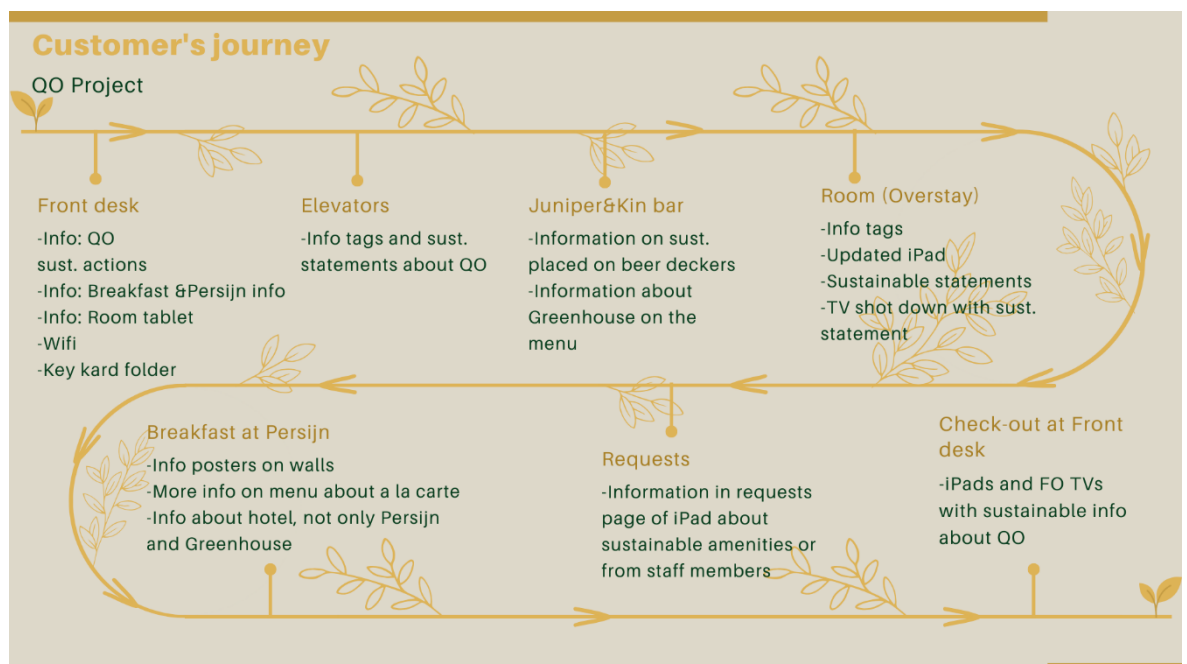


Image 12. Customer's journey in OO hotel (Butomo 2020)

Image 12 signifies all important places in OO hotel that guest can approach during his/her customer journey. Image 12 is reflecting customer's journey, based on my experience of customer's sequence of visiting places in OO hotel, as well as on route interviews statistically had. Ever hotel visit by particular customer is unique customer journey.

Based on my observation of these unique guests' stays and explorations, I designed average version of guest's journey. Locations, seen on image 12, are significant "stops" in every customer journey and that are being missed by guests in rare circumstances. Image 12 is made in a way of customer's journey to: visually understand what suggestions and how can be implemented on different stages of guest's journey through hotel, as well as for reader's convenient following and perception. Forming my suggestion according to OO guest's journey allowed me to understand on which phase or "stop" particular info can be implemented and by what means. What is more, looking at the process of exploring the

hotel by customer's eyes is allowing one to see details in guest's perception and understand what kind of info he/she has or has not possibility to see.

Following suggestions, that can be seen in this chapter, are divided into several different groups to follow consumer's steps. Suggestions are specified in ways of how awareness could be raised differently in every place of the hotel. Image 12 is including main essence of ideas and solutions, more details about which can be found in this chapter.

As mentioned in QO chapter, there are four main info sources inside the QO: Front desk, iPad in room, J&K and Persijn. As follows from conclusions in previous chapter, QO methods of awareness are correct, but for guest to be aware of the hotel's sustainable actions, they need to be confronted with them. As QO believes in communication and built most its info sources on it, some of suggestions in this chapter will be based on support of this tactic. All in all suggestions in this part is designed in a way that even if a guest will miss all current inner information sources, there will be something independent from them that can make him/her aware and maybe encourage to learn more.

In my solutions, listed below, I combined different studies' approach and views on luxury, was of raising customer awareness and maintaining all above in sustainable ways, that means, without any additional harm to ecology. My solutions are mostly based on "wow" factors defined by Chebaiki's, combined with EHL (2020) view of luxury of "being a little bit extra in its services", and leading those to customer-employee communication both as effective way of awareness rising tool as identified by Varun and Indu (2015), but also as a core element in customer's satisfaction, defined by Conway (2006). As for sustainable standards and guiding, I used Brundtland Commission (1987) approach. The last defined sustainability as "meeting our current needs without trading off the capacity of people in the future to meet their own", in other words suggested ideas are designed without any extra harm to eco system, sustainable system and approach of the hotel or violation of both sustainable and hotel eco standards. In its form and approach, I used Voco brochures example as a benchmark object. Voco brochures was chosen due to being a good example how customer awareness can be raised inside the hotel. Re-comprehending and reconsidering this form of approach, I found ways of it being useful tool for QO case. Ways and different examples of this outcome can be seen in various suggestions. What is more, I used already existing QO sources examples to upgrade them according to my visions and observations. Furthermore, in designing suggestions I was guided by benchmark examples in theory chapter.

## 7.1 Front Office desk

First significant “stop” in customer’s journey is a Front desk. This is first contact with hotel employees in this chain. As said by QO front desk employee Laia EsAr (15 November 2019) in her interview, standard amount of info given to a guest is how iPad is working, Wi-Fi password info, info about breakfast in Persijn, the fact that QO is a sustainable hotel and is paperless, so menu for restaurant can be found in iPad and Façade can also be controlled from there.

Unfortunately, as analysis results show lack of information from front desk department, as well as that front desk employees can miss part of information about sustainability. I personally observed missing of info at Front office, during my work placement at QO. Sometimes Front desk employees are mentioning facts like “We are sustainable, so we use iPads” or “We are sustainable, so we have no buffet system at breakfast”. For example, it is not enough to mention that Persijn is working in a la carte system, it is important to explain, why they do so. For a front office employee, it is a must to mention about iPads through which systems control can be used but mentioning that iPad is also an informational source should be compulsory as well.

As mentioned before in theoretical framework, some information can be missed by customer, or by Front office employees, as stated in QO chapter, due to personal factors. What is more, as stated from analysis results of Greenhouse case, when faced with information, guest is more likely to remember it, then it is just briefly mentioned. To ensure customer’s awareness in situations when front desk employees missing information due to external factors (busy day, guest’s tiredness, etc.), front desk iPads and TVs can be implemented to make customers more aware of QO sustainable actions. iPads and TVs can show slideshow or short soundless video clip with facts about QO and its sustainable statements, e.g. what they believe in and what they do.

This suggestion was done based on luxury factor of non-disturbance of customers, simplicity, and smoothness in service, mentioned previously in theoretical framework. Due to that reasons, brochures, or long lectures about QO’s actions cannot be implemented. As QO is a sustainable hotel and is determined to prove it, significant use of paper was off the list. As stated in theoretical framework chapter, according to Smartvatten (2019), the average hotel guest generates about 1 kg of waste per night. Even in condition that QO can use recyclable paper, they cannot guarantee 100% of customers taking brochures with them, therefore, it could be a giant paper waste. To maintain both luxury and sustainable standards, idea with TVs was suggested.

As mentioned before, for a front office employee it is mandatory to mention Wi-Fi info and password. Due to the same factors mentioned above, welcome page is a non-disturbing solution, allowing to increase awareness among guests. As analysis shown not enough info coming from front office, following solution can be possible decision for that. If employees are missing info, it can be implemented in essentials on this stage. One of such solutions can be designing a welcome page with “Connect to Wi-Fi” button. What is more, on this welcome page one could find sustainable facts. Example of that can be seen on image 13. As in my experience, only a rare guest is not using hotel wi-fi while visit or overstay, by designing welcome page with information, the hotel can ensure that almost 100% of customers will receive at least some amount of information regarding its sustainable actions. This idea is based on my opinion and came from my observations – Wi-Fi is something essential and present in QO, as in other hotels, therefore, the benefit of making it more interesting and info-consisting is clear.

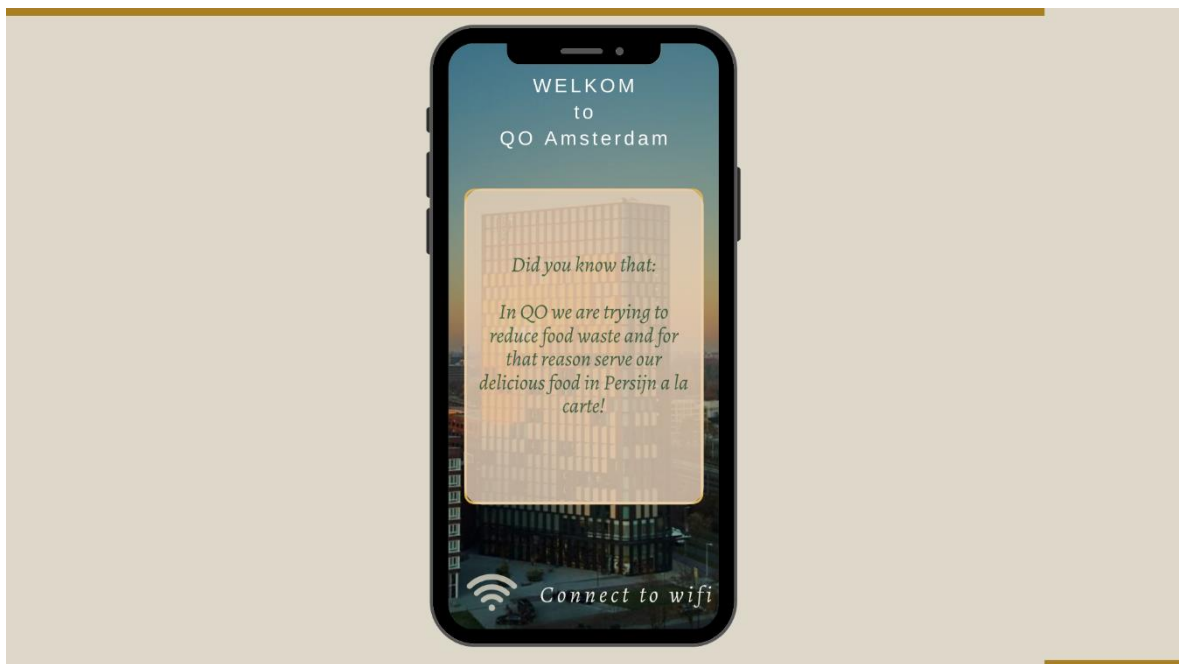


Image 13. Welcome page with QO sustainable fact (Butomo 2020)

One more detail that can be done on this stage of customer journey, is re-designing a key card folder. Current key-card folder (outer and inner side) can be seen on images 14 and 15. On image 15 space for a card is indicated by green colour.

## Key card folder

QO Project



Image 14. Current QO Amsterdam card, outer side (Butomo 2020)

QO is one of the hotels who is still using paper key-folders, however, their paper is 100% recyclable. The aim of a key holder is to contain info on guest's room and check out date, as well as to hold their card in more convenient way.

## Key card folder

QO Project

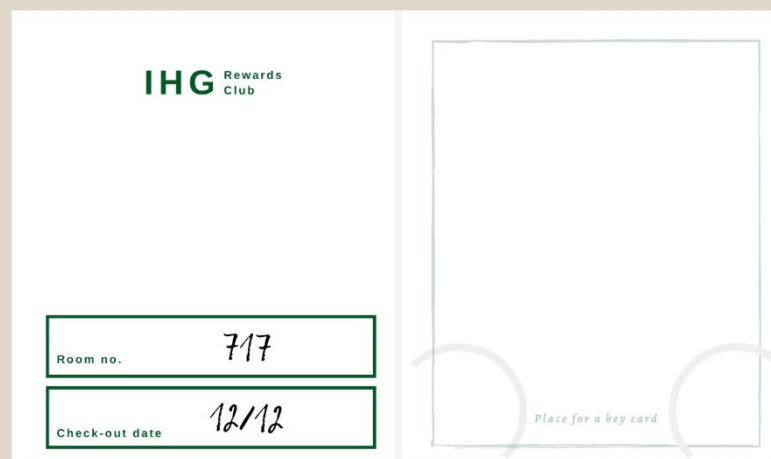


Image 15. Current QO Amsterdam card, inner side (Butomo 2020)

As can be seen on image 15, inner side of a QO key card holder is quite spacious. My suggestion is to use this space to place QO's sustainable statements and facts. Doing so,

hotel can raise customer awareness through an act that guest will do anyway- look inside a key holder, to revise a room number or to take out a card- and catch a sustainable info on the way.

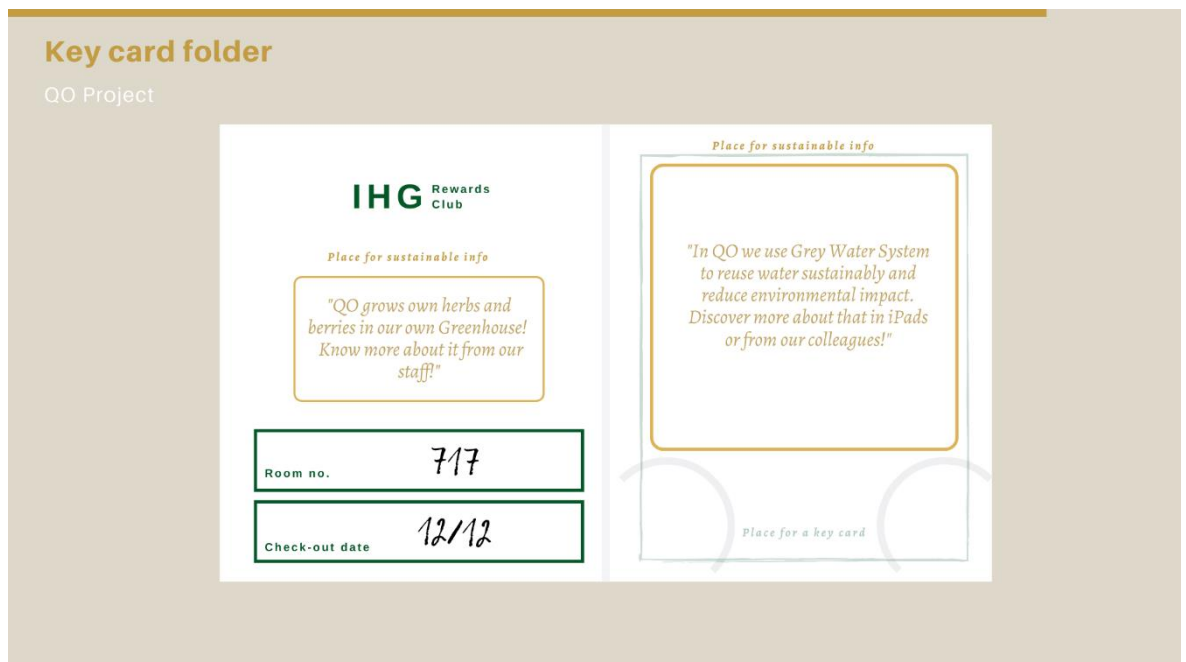


Image 16. QO key card holder with sustainable info (Butomo 2020)

On image 16 can be seen my example of implementing last suggestion to life. Free space underneath the card or left from it can be used to place some sustainable facts about the hotel with encouraging message to ask more. It is understandable, that a big amount of information will not fit in such tiny space, though, it is possible to write main aspects shortly, so guests will have time to read through them while standing in elevator, for instance.

As stated by to EHL (2020), luxury can be found in a small thing such as creating a meaningful experience; in luxury, things can be more powerful than words: service, a view, something you don't expect, something more than you'd expected - It's the 'wow!' factor that goes beyond expectations and can be translated into a number of things.

This suggestion is based on same survey results, that signified lack of awareness at Front office stage. I got the idea about key card folders when I was experiencing my "guest experience" stay and I was wondering why the hotel is leaving this much space for nothing. My suggestions regarding key card folders is focusing on brining unexpected thoughtful

service through small things. No one expect key folder to contain information about the hotel – it is unexpected, from guest’s point of view, sustainable, as not demanding any extra production, and profitable for the hotel’s awareness.

It can be useful to signify iPad as a source of sustainable information outside of front desk as well. According to survey results, not much number of guests used in-room tablet as a data finding tool. Therefore, placing this information can encourage guests to read through “About QO” tab in iPad.

## **7.2 Elevators**

On this stage, it can be a possible suggestion of placing info tags inside the elevator. QO’s elevators have no buttons inside and are controlled from the outside, when one is calling it, therefore, this implementation left a lot of free space in elevators filled with nothing. As guests are spending some time there, going up to their rooms or to J&K bar and down for check-in, breakfast or just for a walk, it can be possible solution to place some amount of information there as well. It can compensate missing information at Front desk (as concluded from survey results). What is more, from my observations, while standing in elevator, it can be beneficial both to keep yourself busy with something and research new info about the hotel.

Text of informational tag should not be too long, so customers can read it while being in elevator. Examples of this text can be found below:

“Do you know that...?”

QO use recyclable paper for keyholders.

Receive more info from our staff members!”

“In QO we are saving energy, consumed from the wind. For that reason, exactly our elevators are operating in a smart system. When being called, the closest elevator is arriving.

That allow us to save energy sustainably!

Know more about that from QO team!”

“Do you know that...?”

In QO we are 99% paperless.

That is why only thing that you need in a room is tablet!”

Short information regarding sustainability in the hotel can be seen as unexpected and interesting act, creating small “wow” experience for the guest, as stated by Chebaiki’s (EHL 2020), as well as allow hotel not to use any extra material such as paper to carrying these information, confirming its sustainable approach.

### **7.3 Juniper&Kin bar**

Juniper&Kin bar advantage is in its location. It is situated right under Greenhouse, which can be even seen from the bar. As stated by Varun and Indu (2015), possible way of effective customer awareness can be coming from aware employees. That is not including only Front office, but every department. As stated earlier in this study, QO employees from all departments are being educated on the hotel’s sustainable actions. Therefore, they (employees) are ready to make customers more aware of their actions. Following suggestion is designed to gain consumer’s attention and to push him/her towards guest-employee communication. One of conclusion of analysis was that though QO communication methods for raising customer awareness are useful, they are not effective enough. Implementing one of suggested ideas can be way of raising them.

Beneficial for customer awareness about Greenhouse would be include short information about it into J&K menu. Kitchen of the bar is using herbs, berries as well as edible flowers from Greenhouse in making its cocktails. Therefore, guests can also try products from floor above, while researching about it in the menu or from bar employees.

Guided by Voco hotel brochures as benchmark example and Chebaiki’s concept of unexpected pleasant things forming “wow” factors, I created next suggestion. Short info about sustainability in the hotel and its efforts can be placed on beer decker or coasters. This essential element, on my experience, is always in use in the bar, and can be good addition to raising awareness in the hotel, as well as a pleasant bonus both to overstay guests and people visiting. Example of how it can be designed and done can be seen on image 17. Messages can be encouraging and informative, guests can further discuss data gained with the bar employees.



Image 17. J&K coaster example (Butomo 2020)

#### 7.4 Room

Room is the place where a guest will spend most of its time in a hotel. In current situation, the only one info source in the room is iPad tablet with “About QO” tab inside among other features. As analysis shows, research about QO was done by only 26.7% of guests visited. Most of customers used tablet for Facade and TV control, less- for previous two and food ordering. Some guests could just look through tablet without noticing it, some could not be interested in it at those moment. Nevermind the reason, in room tablet was not as effective as QO expected, and as should have been as one of major sources of inner guests’ awareness.

My further suggestions in this chapter regarding room implementations are connected to Keng, Huang & Zheng (2007) discovery about a personal interaction having positive influence on customer’s experience as a part of luxury-connected aspect, which is overlapping with Varun and Indu (2015), statement that self-reinforcing relationship between employee and customer leads to last’s satisfaction. Suggestions are focused on guests facing small amount of info and then learn more from the hotel staff or iPad. Even in case when a customer is not willing to learn more, he/she is becoming more aware about the hotel’s actions by just facing them, for instance, like benchmark example with Voco hotel brochures inside rooms.

My further suggestions are also taking mentioned earlier Chebaiki's (EHL 2020) concept of creating "wow" factor and "wow" experience as a significant part of luxury service. In my suggestions I combined ideas that can be seen by guests as unexpected and pleasant, which can aware them as well. My suggestions in this chapter is done in a way of maintaining QO's unique aesthetic style, as it is also a significant part of the hotel's luxury image.

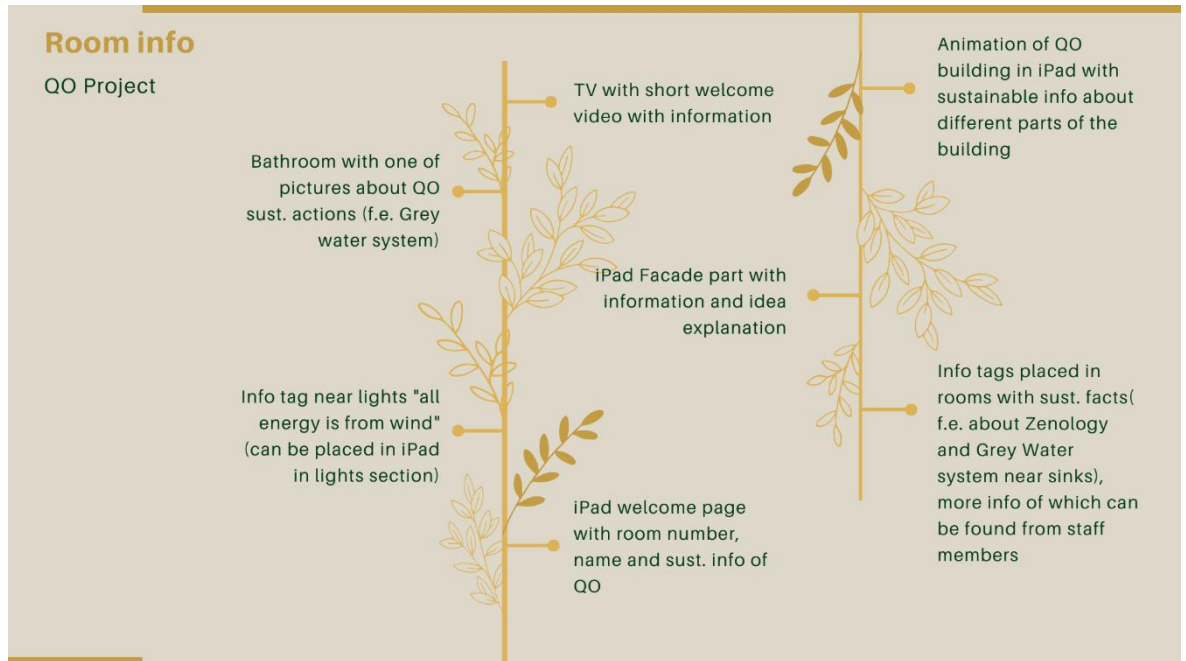


Image 18. QO Room suggestions (Butomo 2020)

For reader's most convenient perception of further suggestions, they were designed in one image (image 18). Image 18 accommodates all important guest's "steps" inside the room, equally as image 12 represents customer's "stops" inside whole hotel. Reader can look at it and gain the main idea of my propositions, details of which can be found below.

All QO rooms are equipped with TV. When being turned on, it shows words "welcome" in different languages and then open page where you can choose either to watch TV channels, or to connect to other devices. Possible raising awareness suggestion regarding TV can be including short video clip with information about QO hotel as a sustainable one: their believes and actions, reasons for doing so, etc. The video can be soundless and short, and hold short amount of most important info, further of which can be found in the tablet or from hotel employees. In addition, while TVs shutdown, it can show small amount of data on QO's sustainable action as well.

In QO toilet can be found different abstract art pictures, aimed to make space more diverse and interesting. Some amount of information, like sustainable QO statements, mentioned earlier, can be put in one of pictures. As an example, a photo of a Greenhouse can be put and some informational text, saying, for instance: "We are growing our own herbs and fruits in our own Greenhouse to reduce environmental impact. You can try them in out J&K bar and Persijn restaurant!"

Based on my experience, when one is entering a room, first thing they see is a bed, and second – is an iPad. Starter screen of the tablet is reflecting room number, guest's full name and words of welcome from QO hotel. Smart solution can be placing some sustainable info about QO on tablet's lock screen with mentioned above info.

As was mentioned in analysis, one of its results was conclusion that not many guests, who were using iPads, investigated "About QO" section. Therefore, my next suggestion is based on taking some hotel's sustainable info outside only info tab borders. In iPad section one can find lights control selection. During their overstay, guests can choose different lights regimes based on their preferences. Sustainable awareness suggestion that possible to implement in that part is to include information where the energy for lights came from. Just like Six Senses Fiji Hotel in example of theoretical framework, QO adapted to its location wisely and found ways of using natural surrounding for energy production. QO is a sustainable hotel, and acting as one, it is implementing sustainability in all its operations, that is why energy used in the building is made from windmills and has ecological origin. During their stay guests are facing lights controls included in tablet, therefore, in my opinion it will be both interesting to the guests and profitable to hotel's awareness to include this information into lights section or place an info tag near light switch near bed or entrance door in a room.

One more suggestion that can be included in iPad is information about Façade in it control tab. Façade is done as a system and light regulation too. When temperature in room is too high, it is closing to decrease it, when temperature is too low, it is opening to heat a room up with sunlight. When Façade panels are open, room is lighting up with natural light, by doing so, hotel is saving energy. Construction of Façade is done in such a way to mimic plant's day circle- open to a light and closing when it is dark. Information about it (Façade) and how it is helping to maintain hotel's sustainable way of operating can be included in iPad façade control section.

In request section of iPad, can be found diverse number of different amenities that guest can be needing during their stay. All amenities in QO is recyclable and sustainable, supplied by ILoveEcoEssentials (ILEE) company. The company is focusing on making ecological personal essentials for home and hotels, such as toothbrushes made from bamboo or hair comb. QO has an option of free of charge requesting these essentials through tablet. During this process, it can be advantageous for customer's awareness to receive info about sustainability of amenities requested. It can be done either in request iPad section, or received from houseman employee delivering an item to a guest.

To research more about overall QO's actions and sustainable achievements, digital map of the building can be done with information popping up from designated places of the hotel. It can help guests to see overall picture of sustainability in hotel clearly, connect all pieces of info they already received and to fill missing points. Researching this section, guest can understand that in room tablets are placed in rooms not only for guests' comfort, as mentioned at Front desk, but also in aim to be more paperless. For example, if one is tapping Greenhouse on the digital map, info about Greenhouse, its purposes, and use will appear. QO has experience doing those kinds of maps. For example, every person can find cyberhate outline of first three floors of the hotel on QO website. It can be explored freely as outside look, as well as inside look. This extra tool can be unexpected and pleasant bonus for an interested customer.

Example of information that the map can consist can how to look can be seen on image 19. Due to limited resources, the example presented is not fully designed digital plan, but closest to it picture with clear structure of the building and examples of information that can be included into real map design. As can be seen, example includes information about Greenhouse, rooms design, Grey water system, Persijn cuisine and serving choice, as well as message about QO's believes and purposes. In real designed map one can also include data about elevators, as well as other hotel's sustainable achievements. What is more, even a digital outline of a room can be done with helpful materials about room sustainable amenities and consistencies.

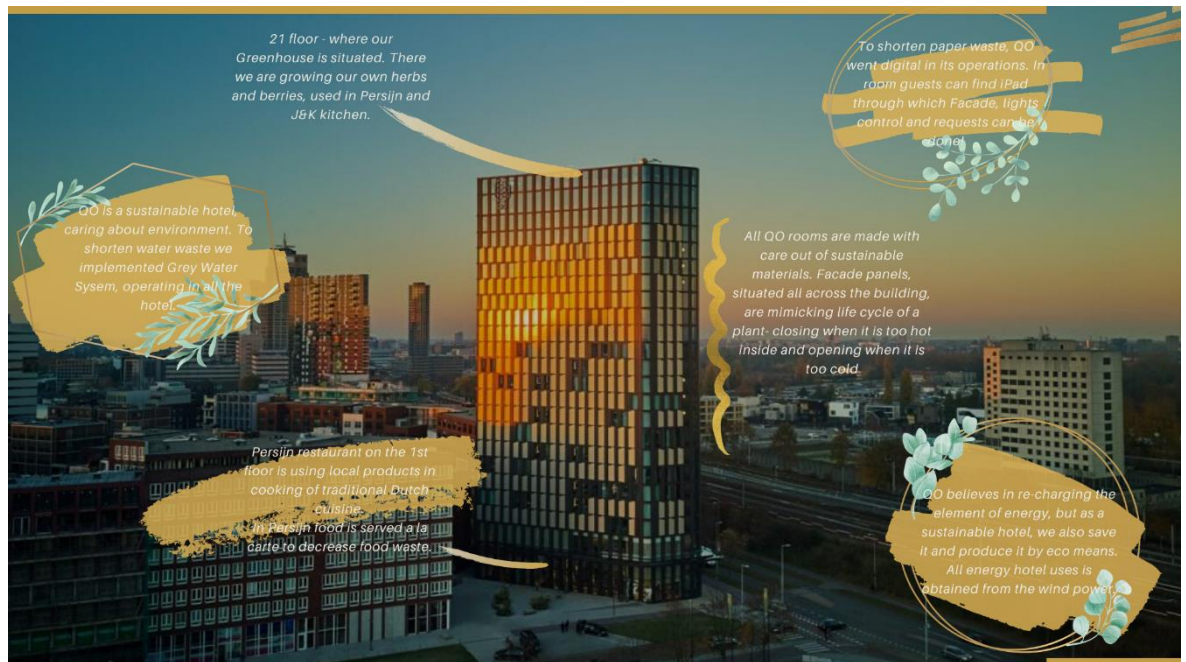


Image 19. QO Map info suggestions (Butomo 2020)

Furthermore, informational tags can be placed inside rooms with small sustainable statements or facts. As one of QO's beliefs lies in communication, one of possible solutions can be placing info tags with small amount of core information for guests' awareness and for aim of them (guests) asking for more data about tags seen. As in Voco example with their info brochures, placing small amount of info can be profitable. For example, tag with information about Zenology choice and design can be placed near sinks, as well as data about Grey Water System. According to European Commission (2016) water waste is one of the most frequent cases to face for a sustainable hotel. QO found a way of escaping it, that is why it is so important to speak about it. More knowledge about this and other sustainable actions from info tags can be then discovered from staff members. Such informational tags can be placed in different places for guest's higher awareness. On my experience, as well as based on surveys outcome, regarding Greenhouse aspect, this approach is effective.

This suggestion is based on Keng, Huang & Zheng (2007) discovery that a personal interaction encounters and physical environmental interaction encounters positively influence customer experiential value. Qualified customer-employee interaction and caring atmosphere is mentioned as a luxury factor by Cavitt (2008). Creating small amount of different info in great design and placing them into rooms or iPad will show customers not indifference of the hotel, and possibility of employees providing more information to a guest creates personalized sense of care.

## 7.5 Breakfast at Persijn Restaurant

Persijn is restaurant situated on the first floor of the hotel and providing services both for overstay guests and visiting customers. Persijn's design combines minimalistic style and pastel colours in furniture with concrete blank walls. Suggestion, that can be implemented in these conditions is minimalistic posters displaying short facts about sustainability in QO, its ecological position and believes. Example of possible poster with sustainable statement can be seen on image 20.

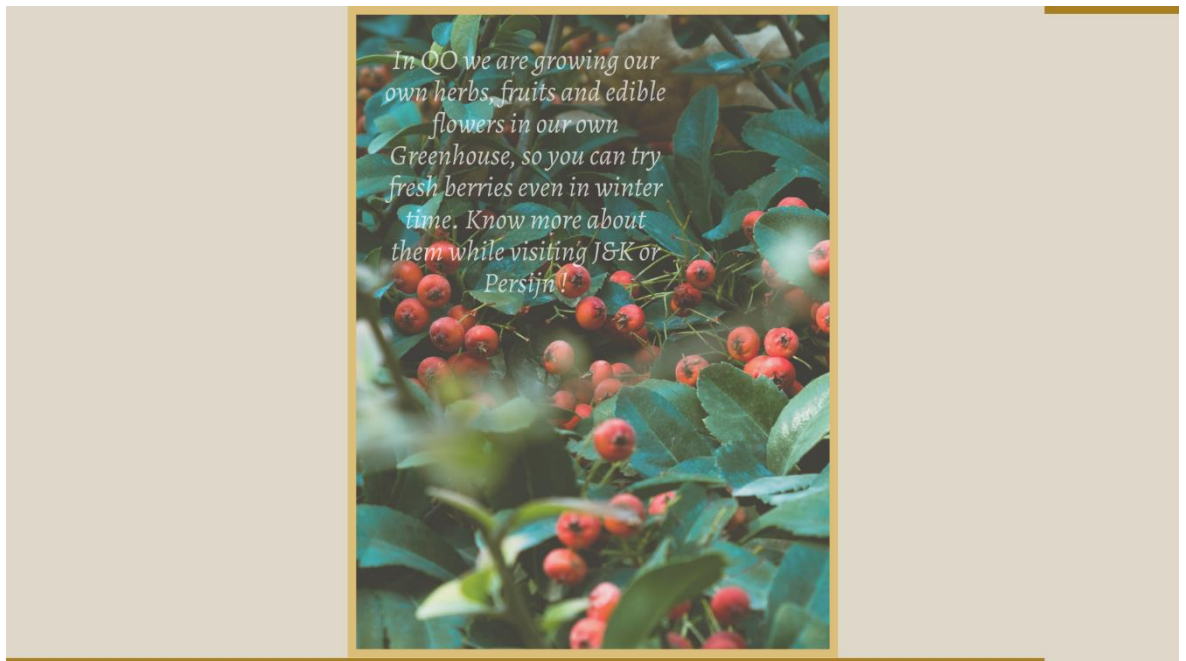


Image 20. QO Persijn poster example (Butomo 2020)

Additionally, it can be profitable for customers' awareness to add more info in Persijn menu. As demonstrated before in results chapter, menu contains only data about origin of products used, origin of the cuisine and some information about Greenhouse. It can be beneficial to use auxiliary details about the hotel in general, its sustainable actions and position.

These suggestions are also based on Varun and Indu (2015) studies of customer-employee communication, mentioned earlier in the chapter, and tactics used in suggestions with, e.g., J&K coaster. Grabbing customer's attention by small core facts and encouraging guests to ask more about them is rising communication between guests and staff, as well as rising customer awareness.

## 7.6 Check-out

Check-out is the last time guest is officially communicating with hotel employee, in that situation, with a front office colleague. After his/her customer's journey guest can learn a lot of new information that can be easily forget. That is why communication in process of check-out is so important. Front office employee, in addition to standard questions about customer's stay and quality of room, can also ask if there is something a guest would like to know more about or would be interested in receiving additional information.

It can be finishing phase of interaction between hotel colleagues and customers, when the guest is interested in particular info seen in iPad or in a room and wants to know more. As stated by Conway (2006), specific behaviours, including the behaviour of service employees, are the key determinants of perceived service quality and of consumer satisfaction. From my experience and observations, confirmed readiness of the staff to answer all his/her questions is not only creating memorable experience of caring and personal interest into guest's questions and topics he/she personally found interesting.

Possible questions that can be asked to guest from Front office employee during check-out:

"Did you know something new about our Façade panels?"

"Did you know something about or Greenhouse?"

"Would you like to receive more information about Persijn a la carte system?"

## 8 Discussion

The case of QO Amsterdam Hotel lied in lack of customer awareness inside the hotel building. The hotel was accomplishing a lot of sustainable achievements and implementing sustainable actions and tools both into its services, offered to guests, and into its inner regulations. QO, considering itself a luxury hotel, was also preserving special style of service and look, seen as a luxury one by them and fitting into defined terming of luxury. Unfortunately, widely informing customers about its sustainable approach outside the hotel, QO was lacking awareness inside the building.

Objectives of the thesis were to find different solutions how guests' awareness could be raised by means of theory research, survey, observation, and analysis. Theoretical framework combined three items: vary studies on topics of sustainability, luxury and customer awareness, and hotel's approach to it, successful cases of hotels all around the world that successfully maintain one or another approach, and theoretical books on these fields. Methods chosen for quantitative research were observations and survey. Working in QO for a while gave me an opportunity to see core awareness factors and all operations from inside, and have a look from employee's point of view, while survey afford me to have a guest's opinion on same core factors. Comparing and combining results of these two afford me to make conclusions regarding quality of information used for inner customer awareness, its sources, weak and strong and missing point in the system.

Applying my findings on researched before theoretical basis, I came up with number of different solutions and suggestions, that can be possibly implemented into QO everyday operations in aim to raise inner customer awareness. Guided by different hotels' examples and various authors' approaches, I studied how weak points in the system (defined by research methods) can be made stronger, how effective existing points can be supported in unforeseen situations, and missing places can be filled. I designed my suggestions in a way that it will not violate or disturb QO's unique luxury style and will not cause any extra sources to use that can affect hotel's sustainable approach.

Reflecting on my own learning, I understood how to combine different informational sources successfully into one solid text. I learned how to write long list reports, linking different chapters and parts of knowledge to each other. What is more, I also learned to think in a vaster way, to see all picture clearly and fully. I likewise acquired a skill of stating my thought straight and explain them in a confident and certain manner.

Commemorating the overall process, I understand now that if survey was to be released earlier, probably it would collect more amount of responds which could result in more detailed number of info for analysis and more concrete results. Overall, survey was released quite early for overall analysis process, which turned out to be beneficial at the end for the study.

Looking back, I was determined to write about suggestions that can be done, because the process of analyzation and making concepts of possible solutions was interesting and fascinating for me. It was challenging for me to research theoretical aspects of thesis, as some qualified information was challenging to find due to specified case of the study. It was hard to make any sure assumptions due to short number of respondents answered survey, and work placement cut short due to COVID-19 breakdown.

Recalling all the process, it was both challenging in some parts, and interesting to investigate on; to see topics from different point of view and step aside to have a critical look at overall work. Right now, I feel much more confident in the topic than before I started to research it. The theme of thesis popped out while I was doing my work placement, and at those moment I was not that confident and informed in all its peculiarities and interesting actions. Overall, the case was very interesting to me, and I hope that my study can be useful for someone one day.

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## Appendix 1. Survey questions

(\* - mandatory questions)

**1. Which of the following sustainability actions by QO are you familiar with? \***

- Grey water system
- Façade system
- A la carte
- Greenhouse
- Elevators system
- Water in rooms
- All of the above
- None of the above

**2. How did you know about them? \***

- Social medias (instagram, facebook)
- Friends/Family
- QO website
- Staff members
- Other:

**3. What was your opinion about QO before your visit? (choose 3) \***

- Modern
- Sustainable
- Luxury
- Old-fashioned
- Average
- Interesting
- Business
- Other:

**4. What sustainability means to you personally? \***

-

**5. Did you get any info about QO's sustainable actions from Front desk? If yes, what info did you get? \***

-

**6. Did you use the in-room tablet? \***

- Yes, but only for TV and/or Facade
- Yes, for TV and/or Facade and ordering food/requests
- Yes, for TV/ Facade and research about QO
- No

**7. Did you open "Know more about QO" section on tablet? \***

- Yes
- No

**8. Which info from this section was most interesting/useful for you?**

-

**9. Was there something you would like to see in this section?**

-

**10. Did you get any info about sustainability in Persijn while visiting it? If yes, please specify. \***

-

**11. Did you experience J&K? \***

- Yes
- No

**12. What info did you receive about Greenhouse and its purposes? \***

-

**13. Did you learn something new about QO sustainable actions after your stay?**

\*

-

**14. Did you receive any information regarding sustainability in QO from colleagues? \***

- Yes
- No