



The Power of Emotions in Branding

A Case Study of Il San Pietro di Positano

Margherita Cuccurullo

BACHELOR'S THESIS
June 2025

Bachelor of Business Administration
International Business

ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Bachelor of Business Administration
International Business

CUCCURULLO MARGHERITA
The Power of Emotions in Branding
A Case Study of Il San Pietro di Positano

Bachelor's thesis 44 pages, appendices 1 page
June 2025

This thesis examines the impact of emotional branding by utilizing Il San Pietro di Positano, a luxury hotel located on the Amalfi Coast in Italy, as a case study. The research explores how Il San Pietro hotel utilizes emotions, storytelling, and authenticity as part of its branding strategy to connect with its customers emotionally.

The main question of this study was how emotional branding contributes to ISP's brand loyalty and recognition. Sub-questions addressed focused on how the emotional connections are built, the role of storytelling in brand identity, and the lessons that other businesses can learn from ISP's approach.

The study used a qualitative data collection approach, combining literature review, a semi-structured asynchronous email interview with the hotel's general manager, guests' reviews, and social media insights.

Findings highlight that the hotel's branding strategy is based on multisensory experiences, emotionally intelligent staff, and consistent storytelling, which are critical to its identity as a "Lovemark." The hotel blends personal, cultural, and emotional elements to create long-lasting relationships, with the support of authenticity to create trust and differentiation.

The study demonstrates that emotional branding, when combined with authenticity, sensory experiences, and human interactions, can create strong brand equity. Additionally, this thesis offers practical implications for other businesses by showing that emotional branding can be adopted by all businesses aiming to create loyalty, differentiation, and long-term value.

Key words: emotional branding, storytelling, authenticity, branding, brand loyalty

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	6
1.1	Research objective and questions	7
1.2	Working Methods and Data.....	7
1.3	Research Structure.....	8
2	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
2.1	Brand definition and Branding.....	9
2.2	Brand identity vs. brand image.....	10
2.3	Brand Equity	12
2.3.1	Brand Awareness	12
2.3.2	Brand Recognition	13
2.3.3	Brand Positioning.....	13
2.3.4	Brand Loyalty	14
2.4	Emotional Branding	15
2.5	Lovemark	15
2.6	Brand Storytelling and Authenticity	16
3	THE CASE COMPANY	18
3.1	Il San Pietro di Positano	18
3.1.1	The Rooms	19
3.1.2	Restaurants.....	20
3.1.3	Facilities	21
3.1.4	Experiences	22
3.2	History and Background	24
3.3	Luxury Hospitality Market.....	24
4	CASE STUDY	26
4.1	Data Collection Methods	26
4.2	Interview Participant and Process.....	27
5	CASE STUDY ANALYSIS & FINDINGS.....	28
5.1	Emotional Connections & Guests' Experience	28
5.2	Storytelling and Authenticity	30
5.3	Brand Communication & Reputation	32
5.4	Brand Positioning & Recognition	34
6	DISCUSSION	36
6.1	Practical implications	37
6.2	Limitations.....	37
6.3	Recommendations for Future Research.....	38
7	CONCLUSION.....	39

REFERENCES	40
APPENDICES.....	44
Appendix 1. Map of Italy, Amalfi Coast and Positano. (Google Maps 2025).....	44

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

ISP	Il San Pietro di Positano
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

1 INTRODUCTION

In a world where everything is accessible with a single click, emotions and experiences have become the true differentiators of a brand. Whether it is a luxury hotel, a start-up, or a retail business, a powerful brand sets itself apart by earning trust, loyalty, and admiration while driving exceptional value to its customers. (Wheeler 2013, 2.)

Traditionally, brand awareness relied on mass media advertising. With the advent of new technologies and the internet, the concept of branding has undergone significant changes. (Travis 2001.) Consumers no longer buy just products or services; they now prefer experiences and emotions (Pine & Gilmore 1998). Establishing an emotional connection with consumers is crucial (Travis 2001). This shift highlights the importance of emotional branding, where authenticity, storytelling, and customer experience play a central role in shaping consumer perceptions and brand loyalty.

This thesis explores how Il San Pietro di Positano, a 5-star luxury hotel located on the Amalfi Coast in Italy, leverages emotional branding to build strong customer relationships and enhance brand recognition. The case of Il San Pietro di Positano is particularly compelling; it started as a small family-owned business with 33 rooms in 1970 and has become a globally recognized brand (Fifty years of Italian Hospitality 2020). It exemplifies branding beyond marketing, where the brand is narrated through its strategic position and the employees who feel a deep connection with the brand, and engage with customers in a meaningful way, all of which create a customer experience that aligns with the brand's core value (Kompella 2014, 199 – 201).

The study aims to provide suggestions for how businesses can create deep emotional connections with their customers. Through a qualitative case study approach, the study highlights how other businesses can implement similar strategies, proving that emotions are a powerful tool.

1.1 Research objective and questions

The objective of this research is to investigate how emotional connections are built and the role they play in creating brand loyalty. The thesis focuses on the hotel Il San Pietro di Positano and its use of authenticity, storytelling, and emotional branding strategies. The study will also offer insights for businesses aiming to strengthen their own brand identity, which could be achieved regardless of the size.

The thesis focuses on one fundamental question:

- *How does Il San Pietro Hotel use emotional branding to create brand loyalty and recognition?*

The sub-questions addressed in this research are:

- *How does ISP create a strong emotional connection with its customers?*
- *How does storytelling contribute to ISP's brand identity and customer loyalty?*
- *What lessons can emerge for other businesses based on ISP's success?*

By exploring these questions, the study aims to extract key insights applicable beyond the luxury hospitality sector. It will demonstrate how emotional connections play a crucial role in building a strong brand.

1.2 Working Methods and Data

The thesis uses a combination of qualitative methods to explore the concepts and their application to Il San Pietro di Positano Hotel.

A literature review method will be utilized to dive into relevant concepts and to build the theoretical foundation. These concepts will then be applied to Il San Pietro di Positano through a case study, essential to identify how emotions are utilized as a branding strategy within the scope of this study.

The qualitative research approach helps identify brand equity and is useful to understand consumers' emotions, attitudes, and motivation (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 362).

The case study approach involves multiple qualitative data sources:

- An interview with a management member to understand strategic branding decisions
- Customers' reviews to gain insights into customers' perceptions, experience, and emotional connections with the brand.
- Social media content to examine brand communication strategies

The combination of multiple data sources allows for triangulation to ensure a deeper understanding of the brand's strategies and their impact on customer attitudes, emotions, and brand equity.

1.3 Research Structure

This section outlines the structure of the thesis and provides an overview of its content. Chapter one presents the key elements necessary for understanding the thesis process, including the introduction, research questions, working methods, and data. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework to support this study, offering essential background information to understand of the research topic. Chapter three introduces the case company, Il San Pietro di Positano hotel, providing context for the case study. Chapter four focuses on the case study itself, describing data collection methods, the interview participant, and the overall research process. Chapter five contains the case analysis, presenting the main findings. Finally, Chapter Six presents a discussion of the results, explores practical implications for businesses, and outlines the study's limitations, along with suggestions for future research.

Additionally, this thesis incorporates Artificial Intelligence applications, specifically Grammarly and ChatGPT, to refine readability and correct grammatical errors.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter aims to provide a foundational understanding of key concepts essential for interpreting this thesis. It will explore existing literature focusing on branding principles, authenticity, and storytelling.

2.1 Brand definition and Branding

The definition of a brand has evolved over time. Traditionally, a brand was simply a mark used to distinguish the products of one producer from those of another. (Kapferer 2012, 11.) As products become increasingly indistinguishable, trademarks emerged to help companies establish reliability, trust, and a sense of quality. Over time, brands developed as a means of differentiation, allowing businesses to stand out in a crowded marketplace. (Roberts 2004.)

According to the American Marketing Association (as cited in Keller & Swaminathan 2020) “a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 32). Kapferer (2012) further claims that brands have evolved from trademarks and are now viewed as emotional bonds, associated with feelings and ideas. Brands are shaped by how people perceive and emotionally connect with a product, service, or company (Neumeier 2005). Furthermore, brands play a crucial role in the decision-making process for consumers. When faced with a variety of product choices, a brand simplifies the process through both tangible elements, such as its identity, and intangible aspects, including brand image and emotional connection. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 36-39.)

Branding creates the emotional connection between the brand and its consumers. It is a process of elevating a product or service by giving it a unique identity that makes it stand out in the marketplace. (Kotler, Bowen, Baloglu, Morosan 2022, 268.) Walter & Gioglio (2018) affirm that the logo is only one part of the branding process. Customer service, the story that the brand communicates, and the experience of each person who interacts with the business form the foundation of branding. (Walter & Gioglio 2018.)

In the hospitality industry, the most crucial factor is to generate value and satisfaction. This value, along with the company's objective and vision, is communicated to customers and employees through branding. (Dev 2012, 5-6.)

2.2 Brand identity vs. brand image

A brand is composed of elements that are reinforced by senses, creating differentiation between one brand and another (Wheeler 2013). These elements are defined as brand identity, one of the factors that differentiates the company in the marketplace (Batey 2008). According to Aaker (1991), brand identity is the perception that a business aims to strategically create in the minds of consumers. The elements of the brand identity are name, logo, symbols, colors, packaging, and all those characteristics that create brand recognition and awareness (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 142-144).

The name consists of the central element of a brand. Selecting a name is a critical decision, as it should be distinctive, meaningful, and unique if a company wants to succeed in creating brand recognition and awareness. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 147-150.) According to Meyerson (2021), the name should align with the business objectives, as it can significantly impact business outcomes by improving customer perception and recognition.

Logos are another central element of a brand and are crucial for strengthening its reputation. When a logo displays only text, it is called a symbol. These logos are valuable for recognizing products and facilitating the purchasing process. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 154-155.) An effective logo aligns with the company it represents, capturing the core of the business to create memorability in customers' minds, staying relevant within the industry the company operates in, and being consistent with the target audience and overall identity (Airey 2014). Gobé (2009) affirms that logos and colors are historically a branding strategy. A logo is a symbol of what a business wants to represent and, consequently, what the customers perceive. Colors are essential for brands because they also communicate emotions. Colors are an important part of a brand's identity, as they

enhance brand recall and differentiation, often considered a key aspect of the brand's personality. (Gobé 2009.)

The initial interaction between a consumer and a brand occurs through the packaging. The packaging conveys the brand's essence by including vital elements such as the logo, colors, and name, all of which significantly impact purchasing decisions. Consumers often recognize the brand through its packaging and establish a connection with it. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020; Neumeier 2005.) While packaging serves as a crucial tool for brand recognition and consumer trust in product-based companies, the role of branding in service-based companies is different. Services lack the physical attributes that packaging provides, such as visual elements, leading to the brand acting as the direct representative of the company. As Berry (2020) highlights, strong brands in service companies are essential for helping customers navigate the purchase decision for intangible goods. In a service-based company, the company's brand identity must offer trust, emotional connection, and consistency. (Berry 2020.)

Brand identity is distinct from brand image. According to Keller & Swaminathan (2020, 71–378), brand image refers to the perception consumers have of a brand. Aaker (1996) further explains that brand image is shaped by customers' experiences with the brand, making it a dynamic concept.

The main difference between brand identity and brand image lies in how they are perceived over a specific period. Brand identity is future-oriented and based on business strategies, designed to remain consistent over time, strategically aligned with how the company wants the brand to be perceived. In contrast, brand image is based on customers' experience. Experiences are more past-oriented and tend to change over time. Brand image is consequently more dynamic and subject to change based on the customers' interactions and experiences. (Aaker 1996.)

Understanding the distinction between brand identity and brand image is crucial, as these elements together influence how consumers perceive value in a brand and lay the foundation for building brand equity.

2.3 Brand Equity

Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, and symbol”. Similarly, Gronlund (2013) describes brand equity as “an indicator of the strength of a brand” and emphasizes that the relationship between the brand and the customer determines it. Gronlund (2013, 59— 64) also highlights that brand equity is crucial for building brand loyalty and serves as the foundation for creating brand awareness.

Brand equity represents the additional value a company gains from its offerings, reflecting its ability to attract and retain loyal customers (Kotler et al. 2022, 268). It is a sign of the bond between the brand and the consumers (Gronlund 2013). It serves as an asset in business success by driving repeat purchases, fostering customer satisfaction, and enhancing value and brand loyalty (Dev 2012, 83-84).

In the context of hospitality, the customer’s experience determines a strong brand equity, which is elevated by marketing and word of mouth (Dev 2012, 83-84).

According to Aaker (1991), the assets that contribute to brand equity include brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary brand assets.

Due to the important role that brand equity plays in influencing customer behavior and business success, this research focuses on brand awareness, brand recognition, brand positioning, and brand loyalty, elements crucial for building and sustaining a strong brand (Aaker 1991).

2.3.1 Brand Awareness

Javaid Anwer (2024) considers brand awareness “the cornerstone of brand success”, describing it as the measure of how much a brand is trusted and recalled by consumers. Similarly, Keller and Swaminathan (2020) define brand awareness as the customer’s ability to recall a brand in a different context, which is developed by exposing customers to brand elements to increase familiarity and recognition.

Brand awareness consists of two components: brand recall and brand recognition. While brand recall explains the ability of customers to remember a brand when thinking of a specific product, brand recognition focuses on the brand elements. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020; Javaid Anwer 2024.)

2.3.2 Brand Recognition

Brand recognition is a crucial factor in how customers perceive a brand. It is the process by which, in different contexts and situations, a customer recognizes a brand based on its elements, such as its name, logo, symbol, and packaging. (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 376.)

According to Aaker (1996), the familiarity of a customer with a brand is what makes brand recognition. When a customer recognizes a brand, it indicates that they have previously encountered it, even if they can't recall the specific moment it happened (Aaker 1996; Keller & Swaminathan 2020). This recognition helps build trust and comfort, facilitating the purchase decision process. Customers associate recognition and familiarity with quality or reliability, and they are more likely to purchase a brand they recognize over one they are unfamiliar with, considering recognition as a form of validation. (Aaker 1996.)

2.3.3 Brand Positioning

Brand positioning is the process of placing the brand in the minds of customers through a marketing strategy that involves the communication of a product in a specific way, resulting in benefits for the company and memorability for the customer (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 77).

Creating brand positioning is extremely important in a constantly changing market, where social media has increased the power of the customers and the internet is the place where customers can find all the information related to a brand (Kosteljik, & Karel 2020, 4—6). To successfully position a brand, it is crucial to identify the target audience, main competitors, and the similarities and differences between them (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020, 77). Kotler et al. (2022,

269) agree that the best way to position a brand is to link it to a desired benefit. Brand positioning must be relevant for the target group, consistent with the brand, and be distinctive from competitors (Kosteljik, & Karel 2020, 16).

In the hospitality and travel industry, brands position themselves around customer service or the experience they offer, often linking it to specific values. This process helps connect with the customers on a deeper emotional level, which creates a long-lasting bond and customer loyalty. (Kotler et al. 2022, 269.)

2.3.4 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is achieved through a combination of brand awareness and perceived quality. Perceived quality refers to the consumers' perception of the general quality of a product or service when compared to competitors. Brand loyalty is essential for generating value for a company, as loyal customers are more likely to buy a product or service even if the price increases, thanks to the trust they have developed in the brand. (Aaker 1996, 21-22; Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 186.)

Kotler & Pfoertsch (2006, 53) argue that brand loyalty reflects the level of commitment a brand has achieved among consumers and that it is the most significant driver of brand equity. Brand loyalty should meet and exceed the customer's expectations (Keller & Swaminathan 2020, 186). The emotional connection is the base of brand loyalty (Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006, 166), and it strongly reflects the bond that a company has with its customers (Gronlund 2013).

Customers become loyal when they select a brand, trust it, and know that their desires will be met again in the future. Therefore, the more brand equity a company has, the more customers increase their loyalty, resulting in a competitive advantage for the company. (Gronlund 2013, 60-62.)

Reflecting on the endless possibilities customers have nowadays to share their opinions online, brand loyalty is the cornerstone of a brand's success.

2.4 Emotional Branding

The internet has altered customers' market position, and they now significantly influence brand perceptions. Social media and access to information have accelerated, facilitating more direct brand-consumer communication and providing consumers with access to reviews of specific goods and services. Companies are now customer-driven, and what makes a difference in the market is emotional connections. (Gobé 2009.) Customers' emotions are what drive their wants and desires and are a major factor in their decision-making process (O'Shaughnessy & O' Shaughnessy 2002, 3—7). Businesses recognized that consumers have a significant influence on how brands are perceived, and building an emotional bond with consumers is essential to increase a brand's visibility and outperform competitors. (Gobé 2009.)

Emotional branding is the powerful connection between a product and its consumers on an emotional level. It is the means to create a dialogue between the product and the consumer, involving engagement with customers through their senses and emotions. By understanding and addressing customer needs, a brand can deliver exactly what customers are looking for. Investing in emotions enables consumers to truly immerse themselves in the brand's world, creating a more profound experience. (Gobé 2009.)

Gobé (2009) states that involving the senses is crucial for creating an emotional connection. He believes that sensory experiences are powerful and can influence consumer behavior, creating a better customer experience. Emotional branding strategies involve the use of colors and visual elements that, combined with emotional personality, create the familiarity that pushes customers to buy a certain brand over the competition. (Gobé 2009.)

2.5 Lovemark

Lovemark is a marketing concept developed by Kevin Roberts, CEO of Saatchi and Saatchi, which explains the idea of strong brands that inspire "Loyalty Beyond Reason" (Roberts 2004).

Roberts (2004) considers emotions to be the foundation of all marketing strategies and tactics, viewing them as the best opportunity to connect with customers. The lovemark concept emerged from the realization that consumers seek new emotional connections, something they can truly love. (Roberts 2004.)

The purpose of lovemarks is to “connect people, brands and their products, inspire loyalty beyond reason and be loved by people”. Therefore, a brand that creates a strong emotional connection and is genuinely loved by its consumers can be considered a lovemark. Great brands, or lovemarks, are not just products or services; they are built on stories, emotions, dreams, senses, and intimate connections with people. (Roberts 2004.)

Lovemarks consist of three essential elements: mystery, sensuality, and intimacy. By mystery, Roberts refers to the way brands are created through storytelling, with narratives that resonate with customers. Sensuality engages the five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. These sensory experiences forge emotional and memorable connections, significantly influencing human decision-making. Intimacy cultivates a profound and personal relationship with a brand, making it an integral part of the customer’s emotional world. (Roberts 2004.)

2.6 Brand Storytelling and Authenticity

At the heart of the Lovemark concept lies storytelling, which is vital for crafting narratives that connect emotionally with the audience (Roberts 2004).

With improved access to information and greater control over purchasing decisions, storytelling is essential and central to marketing strategies. Storytelling is the art of creating meaningful connections and shaping the brand identity through compelling narratives. (Water & Gioglio 2018.) It is extremely important to increase brand awareness (Javaid Anwer 2024).

Dolan (2021) further defines storytelling as the communication of a brand through the creation of stories. The stories are shared by consumers as a result of their experience with the brand, becoming a crucial tool to strengthen the brand and help build loyalty among employees and customers. (Dolan, 2021.) Gobé (2009)

claims that when a brand positions itself through a story combined with emotion, it motivates consumers to become part of the narrative.

A key element in brand storytelling is the core story, which ensures consistency across the brand's communication and helps differentiate it from the competitors. (Fog, Budtz & Yakaboylu 2005).

Brand communication occurs internally and externally (Fog et al, 2005; Dolan, 2021). Externally, storytelling happens through an emotional connection between the organization and consumers. Consumers are constantly seeking experiences and meaningful stories, and storytelling helps consumers feel part of the brand's world. Their emotions are touched, and they can express their values through these shared narratives. They naturally share these stories with others, increasing brand awareness and strengthening the brand's presence in the market. (Fog et al. 2005.) Internally, storytelling helps employees understand the brand, comprehend the business values, culture, and vision. Employees are the key medium through which brand communication happens, as they play a fundamental role in conveying the brand's story and creating an emotional connection with the customers. (Gobé 2009.)

To remain competitive, companies should create a story that makes their brand appear authentic. Through the creation of stories, brands also create authenticity. (Beverland 2009, 15-25.) Consumers are seeking products and services that are genuine, human, and empathetic (Pillot 2018, 155). Authenticity is essential for creating brand value and differentiating a company from its competitors (Beverland, 2009, pp. 15-25). Authenticity enhances brand loyalty and equity, improving customer experience by ensuring that products and services convey trust to consumers while the brand stays true to itself and its customers (Södergren 2021).

3 THE CASE COMPANY

The following chapter introduces the case company's origin, background, and offerings, which are relevant to understanding the branding strategies adopted within the objective of this research. Furthermore, the global luxury hospitality market and the Amalfi Coast context are introduced to provide insights into the competitive landscape in which Il San Pietro operates.

3.1 Il San Pietro di Positano

Il San Pietro di Positano is a 5-star hotel owned by the Cinque Family. The hotel is situated in Positano, Italy, a charming town on the Amalfi Coast, which is part of the Campania region (Appendix. 1).

Since 1997, the Amalfi Coast has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its unique cultural and natural beauty (UNESCO World Heritage Center n.d.). The tourism in Positano has developed in the 20th century, when intellectuals, artists and political figures chose this location for its setting of peace and inspiration, as a retreat to escape from cultural and political pressures. These settings shaped Positano into an exclusive and luxury destination, with iconic hotels like Il San Pietro di Positano emerging to satisfy the demand of this elite target. (Unesco Amalfi Coast n.d.)

Il San Pietro di Positano Hotel is a member of the Relais & Châteaux association, which brings together independently owned luxury hotels, mainly family-owned, that are committed to sharing culture and architectural beauty (Relais & Chateaux n.d.).

ISP has consistently received awards over the years for its excellence in hospitality. In 2024, the hotel was awarded the "Best service" award at the Best Luxury Hotel Awards for its exceptional and personalized guest service (Santinato 2024). In the same year, the hotel secured second place in the Top 20 Hotels in Italy by Condé Nast Traveler, as rated by travelers, reflecting the high satisfaction and loyalty of its guests (NCA News 2024). In 2025, Il San Pietro was named the 4th best hotel in the world by La Liste, which based its ranking on

reviews, guest scores, and expert evaluations from over 400 sources globally (Ratliff 2025). These awards demonstrate the effectiveness of Il San Pietro's branding strategies, emphasizing personalized services, authenticity, and consistent quality.

3.1.1 The Rooms

Il San Pietro di Positano offers 55 rooms and suites, carved into the cliff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Each room reflects Positano's homes and Mediterranean style with a combination of modern touch, luxury details, and unique design as shown in Picture 1. Each room has been carefully designed, featuring Italian marble or terracotta ceramic tiles and handmade fabrics. (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.)



Picture 1. Design of a Signature Room (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.)

The rooms all feature panoramic terraces (Picture 2) overlooking the Mediterranean, Positano, Praiano, and Li Galli Islands (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.). The rooms combine the region's history and local heritage, maintaining a strong connection with the community, providing a truly immersive experience for its guests.



Picture 2. View from a room (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.)

3.1.2 Restaurants

Il San Pietro di Positano features two restaurants: Zass (Michelin-starred) and Carlino (seaside and casual). The hotel offers a culinary experience that is significant to the hotel's reputation. The dishes offer fresh ingredients from ISP's organic vegetable garden, as well as local suppliers and growers. Zass has received one Michelin star for its outstanding cuisine. (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.)

The hotel's kitchen was renovated in 2016, and it was awarded as the most environmentally friendly kitchen in the world. The kitchen features a waste management system that reduces waste by 85% in weight and volume (De Cesare Viola 2016), and it employs a Unit Treatment of Air that filters and purifies the air. Additionally, at 2am every morning, ozone is used to purify the kitchen (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.) and making it one of only two restaurants in the world that benefits from this system (De Cesare Viola 2016). The combination of locally sourced ingredients and environmentally friendly technologies highlights the commitment to sustainability.

3.1.3 Facilities

Il San Pietro stands out due to its unique architecture, which is vertically integrated into the cliffside. The hotel links various levels via elevators and garden paths, as illustrated in Picture 3. (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.)



Picture 3: Il San Pietro di Positano's architecture. (Relais & Chateaux n.d.)

Along with its architecture, ISP features various facilities that make this hotel unique in the area and one of the best hotels in the world. Firstly, it is the only hotel in Positano with a private beach offering direct access. Another facility is the swimming pool, surrounded by bougainvillea, with a view of Praiano. Also, located by the beach, the hotel features a tennis court. (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.). The tennis court is considered one of the most beautiful tennis courts in the world due to its exceptional location and setting (Bailey, 2024), as shown in picture 4. All these facilities are only available for the hotel's guests, offering privacy and exclusivity, and a sense of authenticity.



Picture 4: The tennis court (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.)

As part of its brand experience, ISP offers a complimentary cruise along the coastline, whose objective is to offer an intimate connection with the area, with memories and sensory experiences (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.).

The hotel also offers a wellness area, located under the lemon trees, with a sea view, aiming to combine physical and mental well-being. The spa offers a range of treatments that focus on wellness, stress reduction, and provide guests with the opportunity to relax. In addition, the hotel offers complimentary yoga and pilates sessions on the beach. (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.)

3.1.4 Experiences

Il San Pietro features such terraces as part of its property. The gardens account for half of the estate and are arranged across ten levels, as shown in Picture 5. From these, Il San Pietro sources the products used in its offerings, whether for decorating the hall with flowers or for its cuisine. Only local seeds and native products of the Amalfi Coast are cultivated, and all crops are certified organic. (Il San Pietro n.d.)



Picture 5: The Gardens of Il San Pietro di Positano (Il San Pietro n.d.)

Among the experiences offered by the hotel is a guided tour of the gardens, during which guests are introduced to the produce through stories and curiosities that enrich the visit. This experience is designed to immerse the guests in the origins of the area and the property, highlighting the value of all things locally sourced. (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.)

This focus on local heritage is further reflected by other experiences offered by the hotel: the wine tasting, pizza making and cocktail-making courses, continuing the mission to promote products of Italian origin (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.).

Italian culture is further shared through the offering of a mini-Italian language course. During this course, guests can learn basic phrases and expressions, which they are encouraged to practice in their daily interactions throughout their stay, creating a bond with the staff. (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.)

3.2 History and Background

The story of Il San Pietro is about a family spanning multiple generations, currently managed by the third generation, Carlo and Vito Cinque. The hotel officially opened on June 29th, 1970, with 33 rooms, and it was founded by Carlo Cinque, known as “Carlino” among his friends. (Fifty years of Italian hospitality 2020.)

Il San Pietro was the realization of a vision that Carlino had in the 1930s, when he opened the Hotel Miramare in the center of Positano. At that time, tourism in the area was still largely undeveloped, and the world was experiencing significant political and social issues. Despite the challenges, Carlino was able to see the potential of Positano as a tourist destination. This vision culminated in the creation of Il San Pietro di Positano. (Fifty years of Italian hospitality 2020.)

Initially, the property consisted only of Carlino’s apartment, which he built in 1962. This original apartment remains intact today and stands as one of the largest suites in the hotel. It holds the style and character personally chosen by Carlino. The rooms and facilities of Il San Pietro were developed around this apartment, with the rest of the rooms and areas gradually built to complement it. Carlino dreamed of creating a hotel that, over time, would become successful, although he could never have imagined that it would one day grow into an internationally recognized brand. (Fifty years of Italian hospitality 2020.)

3.3 Luxury Hospitality Market

The luxury hospitality sector is witnessing consistent growth, with a forecasted compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.56% from 2025 to 2032 (Fortune Business Insights 2025).

New-generation consumers are the key drivers of this market. They prioritize authentic, immersive, and high-end experiences over ownership of luxury goods. Their preference shifts towards destinations and hotels that celebrate and promote local culture, connect with local communities, and implement

sustainable practices such as waste reduction, renewable energies, and water conservation. (EHL Faculty 2023; Fortune Business Insights 2025.)

In 2023, Italian tourism has reached pre-COVID levels, with several regions experiencing above-average growth. Among the top destinations with the most visitors are the Sorrento Coast, Amalfi Coast, Capri, Val di Fassa, Val di Fiemme, and Cinque Terre. (ISTAT 2024.)

In the context of the Campania region and the Amalfi Coast, this area of Italy has the highest concentration of luxury family-owned hotels. Most of Il San Pietro's competitors, like Le Sirenuse, Borgo Santandrea, and Santa Caterina Grand Hotel, all have unique characteristics and identities that make this area highly competitive. (Dev & Stroock, 2022.)

4 CASE STUDY

The case study was selected for this thesis to provide a deeper understanding of Il San Pietro di Positano Hotel's branding strategies. According to Yin (2004, as cited in Merriam & Tisdell 2015), "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident."

Merriam and Tisdell (2015, 53-56) define a case study by selecting a bounded object, which can be, as in this thesis, a company: Il San Pietro di Positano. This approach helps understand the processes occurring within the company itself. It is not a generic qualitative investigation; rather, it focuses on a clearly defined, specific unit of analysis. (Merriam & Tisdell 2015, 53-56.)

4.1 Data Collection Methods

The primary qualitative data collection method used for this case study is an asynchronous email interview designed to collect data directly from the hotel's management. This interview method was chosen to analyze the individuals' perspective on a specific matter and gain further insights into the topic. The questions were semi-structured and included several open-ended questions to delve deeper into the participant's viewpoint. The questions were categorized by thematic areas such as differentiation, emotional branding, guest experience, brand communication, storytelling, and authenticity. (Gill, Steward, Treasure & Chadwick 2008.)

Asynchronous email interviews are a qualitative research method that enables researchers and respondents to exchange information online through emails. This data collection method was chosen due to the geographical distance and to provide participants with more time to respond and reflect on their answers. (Ratislavová & Ratislav 2014.)

In addition to the asynchronous email interview, the study involves TripAdvisor reviews and theoretical concepts as supplementary data. This aligns with the

method of triangulation, which involves multiple approaches to the research, intending to increase confidence in the findings (Haele & Forbes 2013).

4.2 Interview Participant and Process

For this research, the interview was conducted with Mr. Andrea Zana, General Manager at Il San Pietro di Positano. The participant was selected due to the direct involvement with the hotel's operations and his extensive experience in the sector.

The participant provided consent before the interview. The questions for the informant were sent via email in written format to provide the participant with flexibility, considering their work commitments, and to allow for reflection and detailed responses. The interview was conducted in April 2025, and the questions were divided by themes relevant to this study. Written responses were then returned via e-mail.

It is important to note that the findings reflect the perspective of a single stakeholder and may not include the full range of views. Further details regarding the limitations are addressed in the limitations section of this thesis.

5 CASE STUDY ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the case study conducted on Il San Pietro di Positano. Drawing on the interview with Andrea Zana, general manager at ISP, guest testimonials, and secondary data, this section examines how ISP incorporates the principles of emotional branding to enhance its brand identity and guest experience. The analysis is structured around key themes: emotional engagement, storytelling and authenticity, brand communication, and brand positioning.

5.1 Emotional Connections & Guests' Experience

ISP includes emotional branding as a fundamental element of its brand strategy. According to Gobé (2009), feelings, emotions, values, and memories are the foundation of the connection between brands and consumers. ISP's approach is to evoke joy and foster connection not only with the property but also with the area, people, and the hotel staff. Zana (2025) said that guests are welcomed with a sense of belonging, "almost like being welcomed to the family". ISP uses emotions to elevate the guest's experience beyond the service offered.

The focus on creating emotions such as joy, curiosity, and laughter during the curated experiences of ISP supports the Lovemark concept, where brands earn both love and respect by building intimacy, sensuality, and mystery (Roberts 2004). These experiences, beyond creating emotions, serve as the foundation of brand loyalty. The goal of ISP's experiences is also to create a sincere and emotional relationship with the brand for customers. (Zana 2025; Gobé 2009; Kotler & Pfoertsch 2006, 166.)

ISP leverages sensory experiences to connect with guests on a deeper emotional level. The strategy involves using the five senses to create a multi-sensory environment (Zana 2025), which Roberts (2004) considers a powerful differentiation tool. At ISP, senses are carefully employed as part of the branding strategy, as Zana (2025) highlights:

- Sight: scenic view at every corner of the property, the hotel's architecture, the colors selected for the rooms and common areas and the gardens.

- Sound: the sound of the sea and the nature, reduced artificial noise, to create a calming environment.
- Scent: Mediterranean herbs, sea breeze, citrus. Also, in-room amenities and public spaces reflect the same scent. Roberts (2004) considers scent the most powerful sense, and it creates a long-lasting memory in the customer.
- Taste: the use of locally sourced ingredients and the local cuisine that reflects the flavors of the Amalfi Coast both reinforce the emotional connection with the area, as food has always been a moment of cultural and social exchange (Gobé 2009).

Another crucial element of ISP's emotional branding approach is the staff. The staff is the most important component in transmitting the brand's values. The hotel continually invests in training programs that encompass communication skills, emotional intelligence, conflict management, and customer excellence. This approach allows the staff to anticipate the guests' unspoken needs, deliver a personalized interaction that connects the guests emotionally, and "turns a stay into a memory and a guest into a lifelong friend". (Zana 2025.)

Guest testimonials reflect the success of ISP's emotional branding strategy. One review states that "Not only is everyone at the hotel a brilliant practitioner, but they care deeply about the guests they see on a daily basis. When you are there, you feel cared for on a level that is difficult to describe. This is why many guests are moved to tears when they check out" (Peter L 2023, TripAdvisor). This emotional reaction validates ISP's success in its training programs and in creating an emotional connection with its guests.

The combination of emotional branding and multi-sensory experiences allows ISP to differentiate itself within the highly competitive luxury hospitality market. With the offering of experiences that go beyond decision-making, ISP creates a distinctive brand identity that sets itself apart from its competitors. This differentiation positions ISP as a Lovemark, able to turn first-time visitors into long-term loyal guests. (Gobé 2009; Roberts 2004.)

5.2 Storytelling and Authenticity

ISP exemplifies the integration of storytelling and authenticity as core components of its brand identity strategy. This section presents the findings from the interview with Andrea Zana and discusses how the hotel maintains authenticity in the face of evolving trends.

Storytelling is a strategic tool in reinforcing the brand identity, and a critical element for brands is the core story (Fog et al. 2005). At ISP, the core story began with Carlo Cinque's vision of creating a space that could celebrate the Amalfi Coast's beauty while keeping and maintaining a personal and authentic approach. This story has been kept alive through the years with the following generations, now the third generation of the Cinque family. The family narrative is not only part of the brand's history, but it is continuously shared through the hotel's people, the traditions like the celebration of St. Peter's feast, which coincides with the hotel's opening day in 1970, the atmosphere and the commitment that guests is invited to feel part of the story. "Every guest who walks through our doors becomes part of that story, and that's what makes ISP truly timeless", Zana claims. (Zana 2025.) This approach allows the brand to differentiate from competitors, being the core story unique (Fog et al. 2005), and fosters connections with the consumers while shaping the brand identity (Walter & Gioglio 2018).

Storytelling at ISP is emphasized not only by its heritage but also by the architectural design and the service. The architecture, the building carved into Positano's cliffs, was described by Zana as "blending seamlessly with the landscape, reflecting Carlo's vision of harmony with nature". The design, with hand-painted Vietri Ceramics and natural stones, becomes part of the storytelling using local materials that further reinforce the founder's vision. (Zana 2025.)

The service is integral to the storytelling process. "Guests are welcomed into a home rather than a hotel". The employees are the voices behind the hotel's narrative. (Zana 2025.) This supports Gobé's (2009) claim that employees are a fundamental part of sharing the brand's story. Zana (2025), in fact, says that the members of the staff are the primary storytellers; they share the brand's value

through their interactions with the guests. Through this narrative, ISP ensures that every interaction translates into guests sharing the story and contributing to the storytelling, with their direct experience (Dolan 2021).

ISP's commitment to authenticity was consistently mentioned in the interview. The hotel tries to avoid trends and maintains its identity rooted in the Amalfi Coast. "At Il San Pietro, we stay true to a simple philosophy: we are who we are" Zana (2025) says. Exclusivity is carefully managed, not as a barrier but to maintain the intimacy and authenticity of the guests' experience. By limiting access to non-resident guests and ensuring that every facility and area of the property is dedicated to the house guests, the hotel preserves the atmosphere of a private home, which further reinforces the guests' feeling of "feeling like home". (Zana 2025.)

At ISP, exclusivity is carefully managed, not as a barrier, but to keep authenticity and intimacy. By limiting access to non-resident guests and keeping the facilities for the exclusive use of its guests, the hotel preserves the atmosphere of a private home, which embraces the guests' "feeling like home". (Zana 2025.)

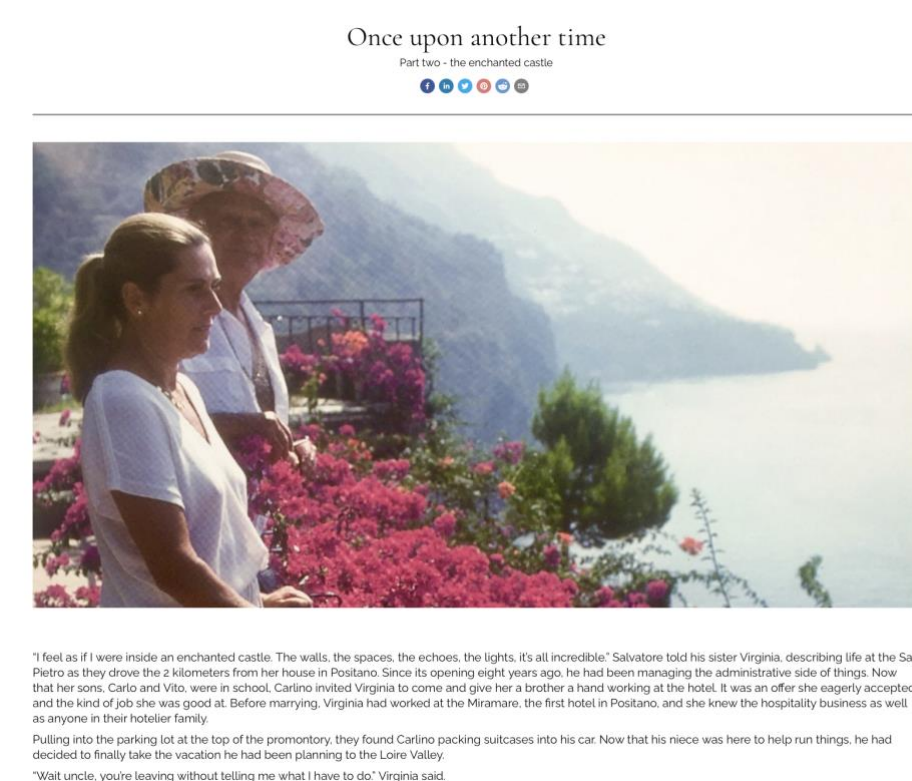
Additionally, the hotel strives to avoid trends in order to maintain its identity, which is rooted in the Amalfi Coast (Zana 2025). With this approach, the brand remains true to itself (Södergren 2021). While remaining loyal to its core identity, the general manager also acknowledges the challenges of approaching evolving trends. ISP introduces innovations only when they align with the brand's heritage and when evolution feels natural and does not compromise the brand's soul. (Zana 2025.) This way, the brand essence remains untouched. According to Beverland (2009), brands must evolve carefully so that changes support the authenticity that the customers value.

5.3 Brand Communication & Reputation

Storytelling, authenticity, and emotional branding are strategically utilized by ISP as a brand communication strategy.

The interview revealed that the hotel has maintained the brand's reputation over time through consistency, sincerity, and emotional resonance, rather than utilizing aggressive promotional campaigns or influencer marketing. ISP's communication approach involves the history and values of the brand through their blog *Il San Pietro Life*, social media, press interviews, and the guest experience itself. (Zana 2025.)

The blog features stories that celebrate the Cinque family legacy, introduce key staff members, and share moments that highlight the emotional and human side of the brand (*Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.*).



Picture 6: A screenshot of the San Pietro Life blog's post of the hotel's history (*Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.*)

Picture 6 shows a post from the blog, called “Once Upon another Time” that shares anecdotes from the hotel’s history, enriching the brand narrative and reinforcing its authenticity (Il San Pietro di Positano n.d.).



Picture 7: Screenshot of ISP’s Instagram page (IG @Ilsanpietrodipositano, 2025)

Picture 7 shows an overview of Il San Pietro's Instagram. ISP visually communicates the brand's atmosphere and values through carefully chosen images of the views, food, and people. This invites people to become emotionally invested in the experience. Posts often celebrate special moments, such as anniversaries or traditions, extending the storytelling strategy on multiple platforms. (IG @Ilsanpietrodipositano, 2025.) These stories and images help ISP communicate its value in an authentic way, which supports emotional branding and builds a sense of belonging.

Zana (2025) explains that ISP's marketing strategy primarily prioritizes word of mouth. Gobé (2009) believes that word of mouth is the most powerful form of brand communication, as it is based on personal experience and is at the core of emotional branding. This approach reinforces their positioning, aligning perfectly with the concept of Lovemark, where "loyalty beyond reason" surpasses traditional marketing (Roberts 2004).

The interview also highlights how the hotel preserves the brand experience, being careful with influencer collaborations. Their strategy also considers customer reviews to improve their offerings and tailor them to guests' needs. (Zana 2025.)

5.4 Brand Positioning & Recognition

According to Keller & Swaminathan (2020, 68—78), successful brand positioning is built on meaningful differentiation. ISP has developed strong points of difference (PODs), positioning itself not just as a luxury hotel but also as an experiential destination. The value proposition of this brand is defined by its cliffside location, generational ownership, and curated services (Keller & Swaminathan 2020). This positioning is reflected in the brand's vision of "offering beyond traditional hospitality" (Zana 2025). Its views of the Amalfi Coast, along with the facilities and experiences offered by the property, contribute to what Kosteljik & Karel (2020) define as the functional and emotional values that customers seek today.

The brand positioning of ISP primarily focuses on the emotional standpoint, which distinguishes the hotel from its competitors in the hospitality sector. According to Zana (2025), guests perceive the hotel not simply as a place to stay but as a welcoming, elegant home where they feel an immediate sense of belonging.

The staff plays a crucial role in shaping its brand positioning in the market. According to the interview, the staff sets the hotel apart by offering personalized and authentic interaction, aimed at creating genuine bonds that elevate the guest experience. With their emphasis on exclusivity and intimacy, guests are treated like extended family, transforming first-time visitors into lifelong loyal guests (Zana 2025).

“At ISP, we believe that today’s luxury is defined by experiences and emotions, values that have been at the heart of our identity” (Zana 2025). Experiences at ISP are specifically designed to evoke emotions and connect with guests on an emotional level, transforming first-time visitors into returning guests (Zana 2025). A brand that combines a story and emotion in its positioning motivates consumers to be part of the narrative (Gobé 2009).

Zana (2025) points out how many guests speak about the emotional connection that forms during their stay. Guest reviews on TripAdvisor, in fact, support this positioning and brand image. Many describe a deep sense of belonging, referring to their experiences as feeling like family. For example, one guest noted, “From the moment we arrived, we were made to feel like part of ISP’s family” (Flyingbird_12 on TripAdvisor, April 2025), while another shared, “the staff everywhere is amazing, so welcoming, they really treat every guest as family” (Beth, 2024, TripAdvisor).

6 DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that Il San Pietro uses emotions as a fundamental part of its strategy, rather than merely as a tool. This strategy is achieved through a combination of branding approaches.

Sensory experiences, specifically sight, sound, touch, scent, and taste, are used to create brand recognition. These sensory experiences have the power to transform the guest experience into a memorable one, fostering attachment, loyalty, and love (Roberts 2004). The staff powers the brand's value and creates emotional connections during their daily interactions with customers. These interactions help the brand build loyalty and are frequently highlighted in guest reviews, which often emphasize that they felt like part of the family. The reviews reveal that the interaction is what they remember the most after the brand's experience. These strategies position the brand as a Lovemark, a concept introduced by Roberts (2004), where customer loyalty goes beyond reason.

Additionally, storytelling based on the family creates an authentic and unique environment, which fosters a sense of belonging, where guests become part of the narrative itself. This aligns with Fog et al. (2005), who argue that a brand's story is essential for building emotional bonds with consumers.

Emotions are therefore created through a combination of setting, emotional cues, and human interactions. These experiences leave a lasting impression on the customer, inspiring them to return and relive the same emotions, which is then translated into brand equity, aligning with Aaker's (1991, 1996) essentials for becoming a strong brand. The emotional bond is not only created but also maintained through consistency in service, environment, and communication. ISP's approach to marketing, with the preference for word-of-mouth and authentic storytelling, demonstrates how emotional branding can generate recognition, as affirmed by Gobé (2008).

6.1 Practical implications

ISP's branding strategy can offer insights for other brands aiming to preserve authenticity, build brand equity, and brand identity. The case of Il San Pietro di Positano suggests that emotional branding, storytelling, and authenticity, when included in operations and communications, can create long-term equity.

Other businesses could learn from ISP by implementing various strategies:

- Investing in employee training can be seen as a benefit. Emotional intelligence service can improve communication and customer satisfaction in a highly competitive market.
- Implementing storytelling as part of the strategy, focusing on locality and heritage to create differentiation.
- Incorporating sensory experiences may strengthen customer loyalty and create memorabilia.
- Businesses should focus their marketing strategies on consistency and sincerity, reflecting the current preferences of customers, which are more important than aggressive marketing tactics.

6.2 Limitations

Although the case study provides deep insights, the research focuses solely on one brand within a specific geographical and cultural context. As a result, the findings may not be applicable to all brands, particularly those not operating in the luxury hospitality sector. Larger-scale or cost-driven businesses may struggle to maintain the same level of authenticity and personalized service. Additionally, the findings are based on qualitative data, which lacks the statistical insights that quantitative data could provide.

The research is also limited by the interview with only one stakeholder from the hotel's management, which may introduce a positive bias and overlook the negative aspects of the branding strategy.

Direct insights from guests could further validate the findings from the customer's perspective. Due to the high-end target audience and the geographical

positioning of the researcher and the case company, further research from the customers' perspective was not feasible.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Given the limitations of this study, future research may focus on a comparative analysis of luxury sector hotels to identify shared operational strategies or distinct approaches, thereby enhancing the understanding of this field of study. Moreover, further investigations could examine emotional branding across various cultures and demographics. Additionally, research could investigate the measurement of emotional branding using quantitative methods to assess its impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

7 CONCLUSION

This research has explored how Il San Pietro di Positano uses emotional branding to foster strong emotional connections and build lasting brand loyalty. By focusing on authenticity, storytelling, and sensory experiences, ISP transforms the guest experience into a memorable and emotional journey. The findings reveal that emotional branding can serve as a strategic foundation for the brand's identity and business operations.

The case study highlights that ISP's storytelling, based on family heritage and locality, creates a narrative that invites customers to become part of the brand's story, improving customer attachment to the brand and loyalty. Moreover, the delivery of multisensory experiences combined with genuine human interactions through well-trained staff reinforces these emotional bonds, positioning ISP as a Lovemark.

These insights provide valuable lessons not only for luxury hospitality brands but also for other businesses seeking to build authentic and differentiated brand identities. Emotional branding, supported by staff, storytelling, and sensory elements, emerges as a powerful approach to achieving brand equity and customer loyalty.

Although this study is limited by its focus on a single brand and the use of qualitative data, it provides a foundation for future research. Comparative studies across different cultures and industries, as well as quantitative insights into the impacts of emotional branding, would further enrich this field.

The research highlights the essential role of emotional connections in brand building, demonstrating that brands that engage customers on an emotional level can create lasting loyalty and recognition that stand out in today's competitive market.

REFERENCES

Aaker, D. A. 1996. Building strong brands. The Free Press.

Aaker, D. 1991. Managing Brand Equity. Capitalizing on the value of a brand name. The Free Press.

Airey, D. 2014. Logo Design Love: A Guide to Creating Iconic Brand Identities Second edition. Pearson Education Limited.

Bailey, L. 2024. The world's most beautiful tennis courts. Financial Times. Published on 15.7.2024. Read on 15.4.2025.

<https://www.ft.com/content/767444f6-d7e9-4d6b-ad68-02dd88fddd0f>

Batey, M. 2008. Brand Meaning. Routledge.

Berry, L. L. 2000. Cultivating service brand equity. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 28(1), 128–137. Read on 06.03.2025.

Beverland, M. 2009. The New Brand Reality. In: Building Brand Authenticity. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org.libproxy.tuni.fi/10.1057/9780230250802_1

De Cesare Viola, F. 2016. Cucina hi-tech (nella roccia) al San Pietro di Positano. Il Sole 24 Ore. Read on 07.04.2025.

<https://st.ilsole24ore.com/art/moda/2016-08-02/cucina-hi-tech-nella-roccia-san-pietro-positano-111832.shtml?uuid=ADOLz10>

Dev, C. S. 2012. Hospitality branding (1st ed.). Cornell University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801465703>

Dev, C. S. & Stroock, L. M. 2022. Hotel Il San Pietro di Positano: Strengthening an extraordinary independent brand. Cornell University, Nolan School of Hotel Administration, Center for Hospitality Research. Cornell Hospitality Report, Vol. 22, No. 6 (October 2022). Read on 14.5.2025. <https://hdl.handle.net/1813/112174>

Dolan, G. 2021. Magnetic stories: connect with customers and engage employees with brand storytelling. Wiley.

EHL Faculty. 2023. *Luxury hospitality: Trends, challenges, and best practices*. EHL Insights. Read on 17.4.2025. <https://hospitalityinsights.ehl.edu/luxury-hospitality-trends-challenges-best-practices>

Fifty Years of Italian Hospitality. Il San Pietro 1970-2020. Il San Pietro di Positano. 2020. Read on 20.02.2025. <https://www.ilsanpietro.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/50-years-Il-San-Pietro.pdf>

Fog, K., Budtz, C., & Yakaboylu, B. 2005. Storytelling: Branding in Practice (1st ed.). Springer Berlin / Heidelberg. <https://doi.org/10.1007/b138635>

Fortune Business Insights. 2025. Luxury travel market size, share & industry analysis, by purpose (leisure and business), by passengers (domestic and international), by target clientele (high net worth (HNW) individuals and non-high net worth individuals), by type (airfares & lodging, culinary, cultural activities, and others), and regional forecast, 2025–2032. Read on 17.4.2025. <https://www.fortunebusinessinsights.com/luxury-travel-market-111834>

Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. 2008. Methods of data collection in qualitative research: Interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal*, 204(6), 291-5. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1038/bdj.2008.192>

Gobé, M. 2009. *Emotional Branding. The New Paradigm for connecting brands to people.* Allworth Press.

Grammarly. n.d. Grammarly - AI writing assistance tool. <https://www.grammarly.com/>

Gronlund, J. 2013. *Basics of Branding: A Practical Guide for Managers,* Business Expert Press.

Heale, R., & Forbes, D. 2013. Understanding triangulation in research. *Evidence - Based Nursing*, 16(4), 98. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2013-101494>

Il San Pietro di Positano. n.d. Official website. Read on 10.4.2025. <https://www.ilsanpietro.com/>

ISTAT. 2024. *Statistica Today – Turismo 2023.* Rome: Istituto Nazionale di Statistica. Read on 7.5.2025. https://www.istat.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Statistica-Today_Turismo-2023_rev.pdf

Javid Anwer, K. 2024. *Perspective Chapter: Understanding Brand Awareness Dynamics.* IntechOpen. doi: 10.5772/intechopen.113985

Kapferer, J. 2012. *The New Strategic Brand Management: Advanced Insights and Strategic Thinking.* 5th Edition. Kogan Page.

Kapferer, J.N. 2008. *The new strategic brand management: Creating and sustaining brand equity long term.* 4th edition. London: Kogan Page.

Keller, K. L. & Swaminathan, V. 2020. *Strategic brand management: building, measuring, and managing brand equity.* 5th edition. Pearson Education limited, https://www.academia.edu/114717131/Strategic_Brand_Management_5E_2020

Kompella, K. 2014. Section 3: Branding beyond Marketing. In *The Definitive Book of Branding.* SAGE Publications India Pvt, Ltd.

Kosteljik, E. & Karel J. A. 2020. *Brand Positioning: Connecting Marketing Strategy and Communications,* Taylor & Francis Group.

Kotler, P., Bowen, J., Baloglu, S., & Morosan, C. 2022. *Marketing for hospitality and tourism.* Eighth Edition, Global edition. Pearson.

Kotler, P. & Pfoertsch, W. 2006. B2B Brand Management. (1. Aufl., pp. xvi–xvi). Springer-Verlag.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. Qualitative Research : A Guide to Design and Implementation, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2015.

Meyerson, R. 2021. Brand Naming: The Complete Guide to Creating a Name for Your Company, Product, or Service. Business Expert Press.

NCA News. 2024. Il San Pietro di Positano tra i migliori hotel in Italia secondo Condé Nast Readers' Choice Awards 2024. Read on 1.6.2025.

<https://www.ncanews.it/it/notizie-lifestyle-47/il-san-pietro-di-positano-tra-i-migliori-hotel-in-142757/article>

Neumeier, M. 2021. The brand gap. Second edition. New Riders.

O'Shaughnessy, J., & O'Shaughnessy, N. J. 2002. The Marketing Power of Emotion, Oxford University Press, Incorporated.

OpenAI ChatGPT. n.d. <https://chat.openai.com/>

Pillot, D. C. S. 2018. The post-truth business: How to rebuild brand authenticity in a distrusting world. Kogan Page, Limited.

Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. 1998. The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre & Every Business a Stage. Harvard Business Review Press.

Ratislavová, K. & Ratislav, J. 2014. Asynchronous email interview as a qualitative research method in the humanities. Human Affairs, 24(4), 452–460. Read on 10.5.2025. <https://doi.org/10.2478/s13374-014-0240-y>

Ratliff, L. 2025. La Liste Reveals Top 10 Hotels in the World for 2025. Travel Market Report. Read on 05.06.2025.

<https://www.travelmarketreport.com/hotels-resorts/articles/la-liste-reveals-top-10-hotels-in-the-world-for-2025>

Relais & Chateaux. n.d. Il San Pietro di Positano – Hotel. Read on 1.6.2025.

<https://www.relaischateaux.com/us/hotel/il-san-pietro-di-positano/>

Relais & Chateaux. n.d. The History of Relais & Châteaux: grande cuisine and chateau hotels. Read on 1.6.2025.

<https://www.relaischateaux.com/us/discover/history>

Roberts, K. 2004. Lovemarks: The future beyond brands. New York: powerHouse Books.

Santinato, S. 2024. Il San Pietro di Positano: il più eccezionale dei servizi. We:ll Magazine. Read on 1.6.2025. <https://www.wellmagazine.it/hotel-operations/il-san-pietro-di-positano-vince-il-premio-best-service/>

Södergren, J. 2021. Brand authenticity: 25 Years of research. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(4), 645–663.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12651>

Travis, D. 2001. Branding in the digital age. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 22(3), 14. <https://link-gale-com.libproxy.tuni.fi/apps/doc/A75620917/GBIB?u=tampere&sid=bookmark-GBIB&xid=35e1ed06>

Tripadvisor. n.d. Il San Pietro di Positano – Recensioni e informazioni. Read on 6.5.2025. https://www.tripadvisor.it/Hotel_Review-g194863-d262163-Reviews-Il_San_Pietro_Di_Positano-Positano_Amalfi_Coast_Province_of_Salerno_Campania.html

UNESCO Amalfi Coast. n.d. Positano nel tourism. Read on 03.04.2025.
<https://www.unescoamalficoast.it/positano/positano-nel-turismo>

UNESCO World Heritage Centre. n.d. Costiera Amalfitana. Read on 03.04.2025. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/830/>

Walter, E., & Gioglio, J. 2018. *The Laws of Brand Storytelling: Win--And Keep--Your Customers' Hearts and Minds* (1st ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.

Wheeler, A. 2013. *Designing brand identity: an essential guide for the whole branding team*. 4th ed. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Zana, A. 2025. Asynchronous email interview. General Manager at Il San Pietro di Positano. Conducted in April 2025.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Map of Italy, Amalfi Coast and Positano. (Google Maps 2025)

