Marketing Plan – Briar Hollow Lodge

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## I.        Executive Summary

Briar Hollow Lodge is a 3-star hotel located in Orlando, FL that caters to leisure travels who are seeking to enjoy the sights and sounds of Central Florida. We strive to provide a safe, comfortable, welcoming hotel with friendly staff that make you feel like you are home. Briar Hollow Lodge has 40 guest rooms and welcomes around 12,000 guests per year. We seek to continually update our amenities and technology to provide guests with the best possible guest experience. The COVID pandemic has changed the way the hospitality industry successfully runs their businesses, and it is critical that we remain flexible and adapt to the changing business environment. COVID greatly decreased the number of travelers and when people did travel, it was often very cautiously. At Briar Hollow Lodge we will be developing a phone application for our customers that will allow for contactless check-in and check-out, access to information on our hotel, the ability to chat with our front desk directly during your stay and request services provided by our hotel (housekeeping, supplies, ordering food, access to amenities, etc.). Using this application, we hope to provide a better customer service experience while still allowing our guests to feel safe while staying at our hotel.

In the following report, we will look at the SWOT analysis for this phone application. We will discuss our goals of the app including guest downloads and app interaction. We will discuss the methods we will use to advertise this new app to our guests and encourage the download of the app. A provided timeline shows our plan for the next 14 months which includes the development, initial roll-out, full roll-out and analysis & future planning. We plan on relying on guest feedback and download statistics to determine the overall success of the application.

## II.        SWOT Analysis

As with the introduction of any new product of service, the introduction of a customer application for our hotel has strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The app can streamline the customer experience and provide easy access for guests to all the services and amenities our hotel offers. As well, with the COVID pandemic, the app will help in reducing the number of touchpoints a guest will need to go through to get the same level of service pre-pandemic. Customers will now be able to check-in on the app or get their breakfast delivered to their room to avoid contact with the front desk agent and the need to navigate through others to get breakfast. There is also a lot of potential for growth of the app and the hotel can continue to

add new features. The nature of the application will allow the hotel to provide immediate updates and up-to-date information for our guests. As well, the app can be a useful tool for letting our customers know about promotions and enticing our guests to return and book a stay with us.

However, there are also weaknesses that need to be addressed. The development and roll out of a new app will almost always be associated with app issues and bugginess. People may not be willing to download another app on their phone or may find it difficult to navigate the app. Employees will need to be provided training on the app and encouraged to inform customers about the app to increase the level of adoption of the app. There are also many threats associated with the introduction of an app. There is always an issue of privacy and we will need to define strict privacy rules to ensure our guests feel comfortable utilizing the app. We also need to ensure the proper security measures are taken with the data we will receive from the app and invest in the necessary security measures to ensure it is protected. Additionally, many other hotels already utilize apps so we will need to make sure our app is able to stand up against those hotels and provide an easy and efficient experience for our guests.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| - Streamline the customer service experience<br>- Provide the customer with an additional option for receiving service<br>- Decreasing the number of touchpoints to decrease the ability for germ spread | - Potential for app issues or bugginess, especially as the app is rolled out<br>- Adoption issues<br>- Training<br>- Requires customers to download another app to their phone<br>- Some customers may not feel comfortable with using the app |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| - Ability to continually add new features<br>- Ability to update guests immediately using the app<br>- Avenue to provide guests with promotions and advertising | - Privacy<br>- Security<br>- Other hotels already have well-established apps |

### III.　Goal

The goal of Briar Hollow Lodge's marketing plan is to provide our customers with an easy-to-use application that will streamline the customer service experience and ensue guests feel as safe as possible when traveling to our lodge.

At Briar Hollow Lodge, we currently have a very traditional method of service. We have guests check in at our front desk and if they have requests or questions, we have phones in each room, or they can walk down to our front desk. We hope to measure the success of our application through number of downloads, app interaction and customer feedback. We are a small hotel with only 40 guest rooms, and an average of 12,000 guests per year. Our target for number of app downloads is 85% of guests per year or about 10,200 downloads during our first year of introducing our app. Within the first three months of introduction, we are hoping to see 3,500 downloads of the app. We will also plan to track the interaction of guests who have downloaded the app and then stay in our hotel. We are aiming to have 95% of guests with the app downloaded interact with the app during their stay. Finally, we will utilize in-app surveys and include the app on our email surveys to help us understand guest overall satisfaction with our app. We will combine this data to give the application a rating from 1 to 10 in the following categories: ease of use, overall look, helpfulness, privacy & security, and feeling of safety. We hope to receive an average rating of 9 across all 5 categories.

### IV.　**Strategy**

In the initial roll-out of our app our target customers are the guests of our hotel. Initially, the functionalities of the app will focus on the check-in process and beyond, and we hope to have every guest who is staying at our hotel to have the app downloaded. We hope to utilize guest feedback to discover ways we can provide the best possible customer experience through the app. After about a year of utilizing the app, we will begin to assess the potential for adding additional capabilities including allowing guests to book our hotel rooms directly on the app.

We will be working with an app development company to develop and support the app in its initial phases. The app development company has partnered with other hotel brands as well and has experience with designing apps that can be integrated into our existing systems within the hotel. We will continue to have a contract with them as we receive feedback from our guests and

will have them provide updates, as necessary. As we progress through the implementation of the app and become more experienced with utilizing an app, we hope to hire additional employees to support the app internally. Our employees will receive training on using the app and providing guidance for our guests, but until we have more expertise in-house, the app development company will still be on hand to provide technical support.

Our hotel targets travelers in the middle price range as a 3-star hotel. We provide amenities such as free breakfast, pool, gym space and business center, but do not provide extravagant amenities. We hope to provide a safe, comfortable, and welcoming hotel with personalized service and friendly employees. This app will aid our guests in feeling safe and welcomed. We hope this app will become an extension of our personalized and friendly service and allow our guests to choose the method that best suits their needs. We hope the convenience of the app will ensure each guest has an above satisfactory stay at our hotel. The app will allow guests to check-in on the app and use their app as the room key so they can go directly to their rooms without having to make a stop by the front desk. The chat capability will allow guests to communicate directly with our front desk staff or easily give the front desk a call to answer any questions or provide any service. The app will allow guests to place room service orders and select their breakfast options for delivery. Additionally, hotel amenities will be listed in the app like our pool and gym, ad provide hours of operation. We will also have an area for information about Central Florida and guides for everything there is to do in the surrounding areas.

## V.     Tactics

Briar Hollow Lodge will be developing a phone application that can be downloaded by guests staying at our hotel. The app will include functionality to check in and check out, chat directly with our front desk staff through the app, access information about the hotel and surrounding area, and request services available at the hotel. Services that can be requested through the app include housekeeping, supplies like additional towels, ordering room service and selecting breakfast options. These services can be requested directly on the app and will even allow our guest to select a time for arrival. For example, if a guest will be gone during the day and would like additional toilet paper brought to their room while they are gone, they can select the arrival time based on when they will be out of the room.

This app seeks to make travel safer for guests during COVID, while also providing a method to streamline the customer service experience and allow guests access to many of the amenities provided by our hotel at the touch of a button. This app is a continuation of our brand that seeks to target guests looking for a safe, comfortable, and welcoming hotel environment.

We hope to have every guest download this app to utilize during their stay, but we will also be providing incentives to those that do. This app will allow us to have a constant line of communication if our guest needs anything and decreases the number of touchpoints our guests and employees must interact with. We hope to incentivize our guests to download this app by providing free breakfast delivery to our guests in the morning and including an extra special treat to show our appreciation for them utilizing the app.

We will let our guests know about the app as soon as they book a room in our hotel, and then include more communication regarding the app whenever we send reminders to our guests about their upcoming stay. We will provide details of the check-in process and let them know about the free breakfast delivery if the guest places their order through the app. Additionally, if a guest chooses to utilize the traditional method of check-in with our front desk agent, we will also have them provide a small paper to describe the app and instructions on downloading the app. This app will be available for both Android and Apple devices upon roll-out and will be free to download for everyone.

VI.    **Implementation**

We anticipate the initial stages of the project to last for 14 months. We are planning for 3 months of application development. During the last month of application development, we will begin training our employees on the new app and ask for feedback from them to improve the app. After we have finished application development and trained our employees on its functionality, we will ask our most loyal customers to download the app and provide feedback. This initial roll-out will last for one month to see what our loyal customer's think and work out any kinks we see in the early roll-out stage. After that, we will begin advertising the app to all guests and encouraging guests to download the app. During this time, we will be collecting feedback through in-app surveys, surveys at the hotel and we will also include the app on the email survey we send to our guests after they stay in the hotel. We will still be working with an application development firm for the entire 14 months and will be having them make app improvements as guests provide

feedback. During months 12-14 we will be analyzing the data we have collected and allowing top level management time to discuss and determine the next steps for the app.

| Activity | Timeline (months) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| **Application Development** | ███ | ███ | ███ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Employee Training** | | | ███ | ███ | ███ | | | | | | | | | |
| **Initial Application Roll-Out** | | | | | ███ | | | | | | | | | |
| **Full Application Roll-Out** | | | | | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ |
| **Collection of Feedback & Improvements** | | | | | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ |
| **App Improvements** | | | | | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ |
| **Feedback Analysis & Planning for Next Steps** | | | | | | | | | | | | ███ | ███ | ███ |

## VII.    Controls

The main objective of our new application is to help our hotel adapt to the unique challenges presented by the COVID pandemic and increase customer satisfaction. The app will help our guests feel safer with the COVID pandemic by allowing them to decrease the number of touchpoints they need to interact with. They will be able to schedule a breakfast delivery so they

do not have to be in contact with other people, and the app will allow them to request services as needed and within certain time frames to limit their contact.

We plan to evaluate the performance of this app by receiving feedback from our guests. We plan to have in-app surveys as well as surveys by email after a guest stays with us. We will encourage feedback in-person when possible, as well. We will survey guests across five categories to include ease of use, overall look, helpfulness, privacy & security, and feeling of safety. We will also be open to feedback on ways to improve the overall app. We will also evaluate the success of our app through app downloads and the amount of interaction within the app. We hope to have 85% of our guests with the app downloaded and 95% of guests with the app downloaded to interact with the app.

We anticipate that there will be some push-back on downloading the app, and we will still provide the same amenities and service if our guests do not download the app. However, we will be offering breakfast delivery through the app.