

Bachelor Thesis 2016

An action plan for a suitable customer loyalty programme for Matterhorn Valley Hotels

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Abstract

Today, a customer loyalty programmes is considered a common marketing tool in tourism. It is said that loyalty programmes increase the revenue of a well-handled business, others doubt the effectiveness. Matterhorn Valley Hotels' loyalty programme is experiencing issues and therefore, a new loyalty programme is necessary.

Research questions: Does a "classic" customer loyalty card make sense for a little hotel chain such as Matterhorn Valley hotels – whose three hotels are based in the same village? Furthermore, can the existing loyalty programme be made more attractive to customers and if yes, how?

Objectives of this paper are to identify what kind of customer loyalty programmes are used in different kinds of hotel chains, and what are the Matterhorn Valley's customers' expectations and wishes for the customer loyalty programme. Moreover, the aim is to identify what the hoteliers are hoping to achieve with their customer loyalty programme and the creation of an action plan to help Matterhorn Valley Hotels to develop a suitable customer loyalty programme.

Methodology: information about loyalty programmes was discussed in the literature review and an overview on various programmes was assembled. The four steps of service design (ethnomethodology, scripting, staging, production) were used to gather information and create an action plan that should guide Matterhorn Valley Hotels through the process of finding a new loyalty programme.

Main results: the majority of the guest visited Grächen once – or less – a year. The people who joined the programme were mostly hoping for exclusive deals and liked the hunt for points. But only a low percentage encashed their points in the end, however, guests generally were quite satisfied with the loyalty programme. The staging showed that way of presenting the programme as well as the timing was important. The action plan therefore includes, among others, reconsideration of structure, offers and organisation of the customer loyalty programme.

Keywords: Customer loyalty programmes, hotel chain, action plan, Matterhorn Valley Hotels

Foreword and acknowledgements

Service design is a rather new field that has a lot of potential in the service sector; and in tourism in particular. Fascinated by this new approach, writing a bachelor thesis, where service design is included, was a logical idea. To write about the topic of loyalty programmes was a suggestion from Marc Schnyder, head of institute of tourism (HES-SO Valais-Wallis. Since customer loyalty programmes were not made a subject during the studies at HES-SO Valais-Wallis, it seemed an interesting challenge to combine it with service design.

The aim of this paper was to create an action plan for Matterhorn Valley Hotels – based on the results found with service design. There has been done a lot of research about loyalty programmes on what the effects of a loyalty programme might be, what the best timing for benefits is, what multiple memberships mean for a business and how valuable a programme should be in order to be of value to a business. Further, studies about serving clients, and if loyalty programmes really build customer loyalty, were conducted. In the field of service design, research rather made the customers' needs and satisfaction, as well as the management of it, a subject. Therefore, the combination of using service design in context with customer loyalty programmes is another aspect in the use of service design.

Fortunately, there have not been many difficulties in carrying out this study except to get the hoteliers to fill in questionnaire 2016b. The absence of major issues during the research was thanks to the great help of David Graefen and Olivier Andenmatten, who gave precious information and insight into the hotel working day and loyalty programme, which was necessary in order to understand the current situation of the hotel chain. Further, Marc Schnyder, who helped to find and make contact with David Graefen in the first place and Benjamin Nanchen for his helping hand and filming the staging experiment. Moreover, both (morning and afternoon) DETOPS-classes for their cooperation and motivation, when staging the blueprints. And finally and most significantly, Emmanuel Fragnière is to be thanked for his great support, advice and feedback as well as lending his two classes for the staging. On a last note, thanks go to friends and family, who were most supportive during this study.

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List of abbreviations

CRM	Customer relationship management
DETOPS	Design of touristic products and services
IHG	Intercontinental Hotels Group
MVH	Matterhorn Valley Hotels

Introduction

Nowadays, customer loyalty programmes are everywhere and it has come to the point where customers almost expect a hotel – or other businesses – to offer such a programme. However, if the programme is not working as well as it should, it might be a financial burden on the business. Matterhorn Valley Hotels' (MVH) loyalty programme is experiencing such issues and is therefore interested in finding an alternative programme, which is more attractive and easier to deal with. Generally, it is believed that customer loyalty programmes are building loyalty, which consequently helps to increase revenue due to influencing the customers' behaviour. This could then affect their attitude towards a hotel chain as well as their willingness to pay a higher price. However, some people doubt the effectiveness of loyalty programmes for its possibly high costs, polygamous loyalty behaviour and imitators.

Based on what was noted above, an agreement between MVH and the author was elaborated, according to which the following two research questions were to be addressed in this study:

- *Does a "classic" customer loyalty card make sense for a little hotel chain such as Matterhorn Valley hotels, whose three hotels are based in the same village?*
- *Can the existing loyalty programme be made more attractive to customers and if yes, how?*

The aim of this Bachelor thesis is to find an action plan for Matterhorn Valley Hotels for a new customer loyalty programme. The following objectives will be answered:

- *Identify what kind of customer loyalty programmes are used in different kinds of hotel chains.*
- *Identify what the Matterhorn Valley's customers' expectations and wishes for the customer loyalty programme are.*
- *Identify what the hoteliers are hoping to achieve with their customer loyalty programme.*
- *Create an action plan to help Matterhorn Valley Hotels to find a suitable customer loyalty programme.*

Firstly, the literature review addresses what scientists have scrutinised and written about both loyalty programmes as well as service design. Secondly, a short portrait of the hotel chain is conducted and thirdly, different existing customer loyalty programmes in the hotel industry are studied. Afterwards, the results of the immersions, questionnaires 2016a and 2016b, blueprints and staging are presented as well as interpreted. In the next step, recommendations are presented, described and put together into an action plan. Potential barriers or resistances are pointed out and solved. Finally, a conclusion is drawn.

1 Literature review

This literature review is aiming at outlining and discussing what has already been written about customer loyalty programmes but also to introduce service design, which was used in this study. Therefore, there are two main parts. The first part is about the customer loyalty programme — what it is and what it is supposed to achieve. Also, loyalty is made a subject as well as loyalty programmes in context with internet. Furthermore, the necessity of such programmes and possible issues are discussed. The importance of management is pointed out and eventually, potential constructions of the loyalty programme shown. Part two is about service design in general and various service design tools. In addition, service design with a theatre-based approach and service design in tourism is introduced.

1.1 Customer loyalty programmes

Nowadays, customer loyalty programmes – also called frequency programmes – are very common in the service sector and indeed, almost every hotel has one. In various studies from Buhalis, Law and Hansen, it is said that in marketing – hence in tourism as well – loyalty programmes are broadly accepted and considered to be an important part of customer relationship management, since it is thought as one of the best ways to improve and strengthen the relationship with the customers. (in Correia, Duque, Pimpão, & Zorrinho, 2014, p. 377)

Customer relationship management (CRM) is a strategy to generate exceptional value for the company as well as the customer by gaining, retaining and affiliating with these customers (Xu & Chan, 2010). In his studies, Liu defined a customer loyalty programme as one of many measures in order to promote a certain product and gain customer loyalty, for example, by using a point system in order to accumulate enough points to receive free rewards (in Hu, King, & Xiong, 2014, p. 575). Another benefit should be to develop a long-term relationship with the customer that is beneficial for both sides involved (Pan, Sheng, & Xie, 2012, p. 156). That is where the term “loyalty” comes in.

1.1.1 Loyalty

Loyalty or being loyal is the virtue of feeling well-disposed towards something in this case a hotel or hotel chain (Loyalität, 2006). In literature, the importance of customer loyalty for companies has been emphasized and examined in many studies (in Hu, King, & Xiong, 2014, p. 574). Ramirez and Goldsmith (2014, p. 209) argued that loyal customers were less price sensitive but also might be recurring customer, which means more frequent revenue. However, loyalty needs to be managed well if profitability is to be achieved. Otherwise the profitable customers end up subsidising for less profitable customers. Using different tier-levels might be the answer to that, which then allows customers to be treated differently according to their loyalty-level. (Zeithaml, Rust, & Lemon, 2001, p. 121) Interestingly enough, guests who are generating high revenue are not necessarily in possession of an elite status when it comes to tier-levels. Instead, their travel behaviour is rather intermittent than regular. Another surprising fact is that so-called “Middlers” – people who are in the middle of all tier-levels - spend more money during a stay than “Elitists” whose frequency is higher. Therefore, it might be a good idea to motivate Middlers to increase their frequency. (Voorhees, McCall, & Calantone, 2011, p. 11)

1.1.2 Internet and loyalty programmes

According to Aksoy’s study, globalisation and highly increased competition have made it more important than ever to achieve exactly this long-term loyalty of the existing customer base that was introduced in chapter 1.1.1 (in Bilgihan, Kandampully, & Zhang, 2015, p. 381). Further, Hu, King & Xiong, argued that loyalty programme strategies were more refined than ever (2014, p. 573). Buhalis and Law remarked that internet marketing in particular had been influencing the competition enormously in tourism and its products and had been transforming tourist’s behaviour (in Correia, Duque, Pimpão, & Zorrinho, 2014, p. 375). However, it was also the very reason why loyalty programmes were developed in the first place. Sharp & Sharp argued that even though, loyalty programmes had existed before, the first, and best-known programme that was widely recognized as such, was introduced in the 1980s by American Airlines: the frequent flyer programme. It was quickly adapted to other sectors like cruise lines, rental car companies, hotels, resorts and spas (in Chen & Xie, 2013, p. 464). Today, loyalty programmes may play an important role in the communication between hotels and guests, considering the transmitted data through the internet has highly increased

in the last few years (Correia, Duque, Pimpão, & Zorrinho, 2014, p. 375). Also, there is the trend of no fees when registering for a new programme, which has been leading to the phenomenon that people join multiple programmes (Chen & Xie, 2013, p. 467). Another innovation is the use of blockchains in loyalty programmes. A blockchain is a new technology which is a digitally shared database with a continuously updated transaction-list. It is supposed to minimise or even prevent tampering in financial transactions. (Morrison, 2016) In Garcia's online article (2016), she mentioned Dubai and Norway, where blockchains are being used to offer a more secure and personalised loyalty programme with the aim of encouraging tourists to visit locally cultural and historic attractions. The questions that remain are if a customer loyalty programme is reason enough to visit such a cultural or historic attraction and if the attraction then is not just minimised to a opportunity in a bonus-points hunting game. Or maybe such a loyalty programme boost is the missing piece of the whole jigsaw and just what the tourist industry needs to start thinking out of the box.

1.1.3 The necessity of a customer loyalty programme

So, when almost every business has a customer loyalty program, is it really that effective? Although loyalty programmes are commonly used as a marketing strategy, the points mentioned above raise the question as to whether a customer loyalty programme really is as valuable and necessary for the hotel industry as it is thought to be. Despite the mentioned wide acceptance and use, as well as the great growth of such programmes, their effectiveness is questioned. In previous studies, both positive and negative sides were identified but there has not yet been found a definite answer to this question. Nonetheless, in his study, O'Malley claimed that customer loyalty programmes had become a "must-have" in the hospitality industry for various reasons for it might increase the customers' willingness to pay, acquiring and defending market shares and gaining insight into customers' behaviour, which is used for manipulation of their behaviour. (in Chen & Xie, 2014, p. 109) However, Dowling and Uncles (1997, p. 19) argued that there was no evidence that joining a loyalty programme and receiving incentives necessarily leads to brand loyalty but rather programme loyalty. Also, loyalty to a certain programme might not transform into brand loyalty – even if this is the basic intention behind every loyalty programme (Chen & Xie, 2013, p. 471). Nonetheless, Crowell's study asserts that hotels like Marriott's use it for maintenance of existing customers and therefore think of it as a potent solution to the challenges in modern marketing. Marriott's

Vice president, Bob Behrens, is of the opinion that members of a loyalty programme tend to spend more for a room in order to earn points and might even be more decisive when choosing a hotel (in Hu, King, & Xiong, 2014, p. 573). Basky supported this in his study and found that 34.5% of customers were influenced by the respective loyalty programme of a hotel when choosing. It was the fourth most mentioned reason why guests pick a particular hotel – right after location, price and previous experience. (in Hu, King, & Xiong, 2014, p. 573) Also, Seacord reported in his study an increase of the factor 2.5 regarding the spent money at Marriotts properties by frequent members of their loyalty programme. Hilton hotels' survey revealed that 19% would not stay at their hotel without such a programme. (Chen, Hu, & Huang, 2010, p. 129)

1.1.4 Problems of loyalty programmes

In spite of the many positive aspects, the negative points are not to be ignored. For instance, there is a trend towards free registration which might be one of the reasons for multiple programme subscriptions. According to a survey in 2011, U.S. households had registered in over 18 programmes, however, less than half of them are active members (Garrido, 2016) This posits a dilemma for hotel chains: since such programmes are both incredibly popular but also expected to exist, it might be difficult or even bad for businesses, not to have one. On the other hand, according to Crowell and Freed, costs of maintenance were high because it could make up five per cent of the gross profit and thus damaged the profit margins. (in Hu, King, & Xiong, 2014, p. 574) In order to avoid loss of money, these five per cent are usually included in the price of the programme or absorbed by the property. However, 28.97% of respondents of that survey indicated that they were not loyal to any particular brand and therefore have a polygamous loyalty behaviour. (Chen & Xie, 2014, pp. 113-114) In this case, the loyalty programme not only fails in its attempts to build a loyal customer base but also means a financial burden to the industry. The fact that half of the members are inactive members entices the companies to offer more benefits, which can be quite costly. (Hu, King, & Xiong, 2014, p. 586) In addition, providers come up with copies of already existent and successful programmes which do little, however, for differentiation in the competition between hotels. This is because the customer might not be able to perceive the value of the different programmes anymore and could therefore end up signing up for several programmes. (Chen & Xie, 2014, p. 111) These multiple memberships do not

necessarily build up great loyalty to either hotel chains nor to loyalty programmes (Hu, King, & Xiong, 2014, p. 574). It was proven that loyalty programmes are not capable of gaining long-term loyalty from customers, yet there is a direct link between hotels' performance in service, perceived value of the programme and customer loyalty (Hu & Kandampully, 2007, p. 440). Moreover, the assumption that loyal customers are willing to pay more for a room might not always be accurate due to individual price sensitivity and the perception of the brand's value. Even though Bob Behrens claims so, high brand loyalty does not automatically result in greater willingness to spend money. It might only be the higher perception of value rather than loyalty that motivates to pay a higher price. In fact, a loyal customer may even expect a price discount for his loyalty — as in a volume discount. (Dowling & Uncles, 1997, p. 14) Although this article from 1997 might seem outdated, it can still sensitise people not to jump to conclusions that might turn out to be wrong. So, after having discussed all the points at issue, the question arises what might minimise such problems.

1.1.5 Management of loyalty programmes

Buhalis and Law stated in their study that in order to stay in competition in the tourism industry, management of customer relationship was key (in Correia, Duque, Pimpão, & Zorrinho, 2014, p. 376). Only when customers' desires and expectations are known and the performance of i.e. the loyalty programme is measured, programmes can be created and adapted accordingly. Among others, there are several factors that influence the performance of a loyalty programme:

Customer characteristics

There are many different customers with varying characteristics. Kumar and Reinartz (2002, p. 10) used four different classifications:

- *Butterflies*: greatly lucrative but not too loyal
- *True friends*: lucrative customers who need considerable nurturing but are long-term customers
- *Strangers*: produce slightest profit and are short-term customers
- *Barnacles*: do not spend much but loyal, therefore a negative impact on lucrativeness

According to the researchers, hotels ought to acquire as many “true friends” as possible for they are profitable and long-term customers. Even though they need nurturing, it is still less expensive to entertain and serve such “true friends” instead of acquiring new customers. The reason for this is the following: once loyalty is established, customers are more inclined to purchase repeatedly (Lewis, 2004, p. 292) and spread positive word-of-mouth and are less likely to switch to competitors (Oliver, 1999, p. 38). What is more, Reichheld and Sasser argued (1990) that retaining an existing customer was five-times less costly than recruiting a new one.

Customer’ satisfaction & timing of the reward

In his studies, Zhang et al., countered that immediate rewards were better in getting people to switch to the own brand, while delayed rewards were more effective when customers are to be retained (in Chen, Hu, & Huang, 2010, p. 129). Further, they found out that rewards were perceived differently depending on the guests’ satisfaction and timing of receiving the incentive. It becomes apparent that immediate rewards are higher valued than delayed rewards. However, when timing and satisfaction are combined, delayed rewards should be used in case of satisfied guests whereas immediate rewards are better for dissatisfied customers — referring to their ability to invoke loyalty. (2010, pp. 130-134) So, in order to achieve the best results for the loyalty programme, it is essential to understand the guests’ hotel experience and satisfaction — inter alia by using social media.

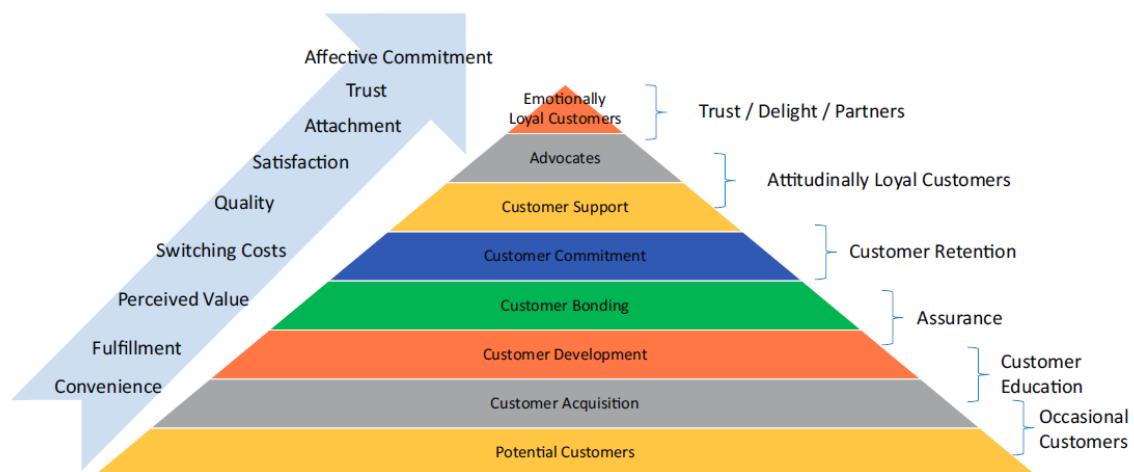
Social media

Sashi remarked that today, customer relationship was closely connected with social media which shifted the power away from companies to customers. Customers can exchange and share information as well as review the hotels (in Bilgihan, Kandampully, & Zhang, 2015, p. 398). So, if customers write only negative reports about the hotel and its loyalty programme, this might also have an impact on the success of a loyalty programme for people who might look for information about it before subscribing.

1.1.6 Construction of a customer loyalty programme

There are many views and opinions about how the latest loyalty programme is supposed to look like. Chen & Xie (2013, p. 466) suggested a three-phase programme. First, the customer acquisition, where the programme should be differentiate itself from others and signal marketing efforts. Second, customer engagement, where customers are split into segments and upgraded accordingly to their tier-level. Third, customer retention, where programme value is crafted and switching costs are imposed. The latter is then aiming to create repeat customers which has the advantage of saving costs as mentioned above. Another idea is to take the so-called customer loyalty pyramid into consideration where each step to a loyal customer is shown. But, since hotel chains seem to struggle to create true customer loyalty, as was mentioned earlier, it might not be so easy to achieve in reality what is shown in theory below (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Customer loyalty pyramid



Source: Bilgihan, Kandampully, & Zhang (2015, p. 381)

Furthermore, Nunes and Dreze studies showed that three-tier programmes satisfy customers more than only two-tier programmes because the third tier-level is only for elite members. This allows a feeling of special status but also a better comprehension of the status for low-tier members. (in Chen & Xie, 2013, p. 474) This might be an important fact for hotel chains who are looking for an improved or new loyalty programme. Although, it could be important to note that elite members' willingness to pay higher prices is not significantly more than that of basic members. The latter is in direct contradiction to Bob Behrens's opinion that loyal customers are willing to pay higher prices. (Hu, King, & Xiong, 2014, p. 585) So, where to go from here, knowing all the details above?

In their studies, Kim et al. suggested the 10 following values to be incorporated in a hotel loyalty programme: bonus for subscription, fee for subscription, expiration policy (points), point gathering, ability to purchase points, awards produced by other industries (and not by the hotel itself), award transfer policy, award limit, loyalty card and an elite level qualification. Most of these values are already standard in loyalty programmes, however – as discussed earlier – the trend is toward no subscription fees. (in Chen & Xie, 2013, p. 474) But these fees could have a reducing effect on polygamous loyalty, which is influencing customers' loyalty to brands enormously. An important aspect in a loyalty programme might be the ability to purchase points as well as the anticipation for special incentives since customers appreciate this flexibility and are more inclined to subscribe to yet another loyalty programme. This fact could be of importance in acquiring customers. On the other hand, it enhances the polygamous loyalty behaviour. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen the value for money, which is found to have a serious impact on loyalty and cannot be compensated with other attributes (Hu, King, & Xiong, 2014, p. 587). However, it is essential to remember that one size does not fit everybody. Globalisation made service and experiences interchangeable, which nourishes the customers' wish for something special, unexpected or just different. That is why a customer loyalty programme should not just copy another loyalty programme but rather focus on their own guests and exactly for what they ask. That is the reason why service design has been developed for (Tisch & Weber, 2007, pp. 133-134).

1.2 Service design

As already mentioned above, loyalty programmes are very popular in the service sector. A service is a way of satisfying a need, where very often production and consumption coincide (Dienstleistung, 2006). Service design has its roots in the industrial design which evolved in an American community of designers; a European equivalent would be the so-called "Bauhaus" which proved to be essential for industrial design in Europe. What they all had in common was the determination of improving people's standard of living while using the new industrial technologies and techniques. Industrialisation helped to produce more efficiently and the designers tried to resolve how to use those products in order to satisfy people's needs better and more efficiently. However, people's needs have changed and the focus nowadays is rather on lean consumption. Since the standard of living has improved immensely, quality of life is what designers are interested in, today. (Polaine, Lovlie, & Reason, 2013, p. 18) Having said

this, service design may be the natural evolution from designing a product – that is, industrial designing – to designing a service. Service design is customer-orientated and is inspired by two fields. In the early days, service designers came from many different design fields where users are in focus. They thought that design can be used for increasing the value of a service. Later, the question arose as to what service actually is. Inspiration came from service management and service marketing which nowadays consider service to be the economical basis of all transactions. (Frischhut & Stickdorn, 2012, pp. 16-17) Considered that the list of transactions in economy is endless, what does service achieve exactly?

1.2.1 Service design tools

Service is an attempt to satisfy needs and is used in order to achieve something that the customers value. Even though service is created at the same time as it is consumed, it consists of a systematic sequence of actions, interactions and perhaps artefacts. When a customer gets in contact with one of the above it is called a touchpoint. (Frischhut & Stickdorn, 2012, p. 17) Those sequences and touchpoints can be complex to a large extent and a main challenge is how to make service interactions visible and further, testable. Therefore, many different tools were introduced, such as in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Most common activities and tools in service design

Insights and inspiration	Ideation and refinement	Prototyping and evaluation	Finalisation and delivery
Benchmarking	Brainstorming	Bodystorming	Customer journeys
Ethnography	Co-creation workshops	Experience prototyping	Blueprints
Interviews		Enactment/Service walkthrough	Personas
Cultural probes		Desktop walkthrough	Business model canvas
Workshops			
Customer journeys			
Storyboards			
Touchpoint matrices			
Personas			

Source: Frischhut & Stickdorn (2012, p. 19)

Firstly, insights are gathered. One or several tools from above might be considered to be useful. Usually it is done by combining interviews and observations – so called immersions. Those immersions help to gather information by observing an interaction or service without revealing the observer’s presence (Tassi, 2016). After collecting enough insights, the question is: what is a good service and how could it be improved? Therefore, visualising techniques have been developed, such as customer journey maps, blueprints or touchpoint matrices. “The blueprint is an operational tool that describes the nature and the characteristics of the service interaction in enough detail to verify, implement and maintain it” (Tassi, 2009). Blueprints offer helpful insights in the service process both above and below the line of visibility, an imaginary line on the blueprint, which separates services that are visible and invisible to the customers. Hence, visible service processes are above this line and invisible ones below. Something quite similar is the customer journey map. However, it is focused on the human experience of a service and gives insight into customers’ feelings, thoughts and actions when interacting with a service (Polaine, Lovlie, & Reason, 2013, pp. 104-105). These visualisation tools are useful because they support the comprehension of a service as a whole and, in the end, enhance the chance of finding a solution. One of such a visualisation tool is “staging”.

1.2.2 Theatre-based approached service design

HEG Service Lab developed a particular methodology whose concept is theatre-based and consists of four steps. *Ethnomethodology*, where semi-directed interviews and immersions are used to identify the salient attributes of a service. Salient means most notable and striking, thus a most striking attribute of a service (Salient, 2013). During an immersion, general insights as well as insights into the organisation’s culture, environment and other influences– maybe even some not previously considered — will be gathered. Semi-directed interviews then are important to understand elements that are evident to the environment because they can clarify and give a broader picture of a service. *Scripting* is to visualise intangible services and make them comprehensible. It is based on the salient attributes found in Ethnomethodology. The aim is to reproduce the service’s most relevant elements and develop a script that can be used for the staging step. *Staging* is the re-enacting of the service (by role play) which is afterwards analysed, discussed and tested again. The aim is to find ways to improve the service experience as much as possible and make it more memorable for the customers. This

process can take until the issues are diminished as much as possible. The final step is *production*, where the new approaches and processes are developed and integrated. (Fragnière & Sitten, 2011, pp. 6-7) Having introduced service design, it might be interesting to detect how and why it can be employed in tourism.

1.2.3 Service design in tourism

Service design offers many advantages which can be useful to tourism. First, it creates service that is not all about price but highly competitive on quality. This is exactly what is and will be important for Switzerland in the future since Switzerland is relatively pricy, thus offering high-quality experiences and services is fundamental, if not vital (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2000, p. 6). Further, intangible services are examined and, in the end, results and proposals are very visually and holistically given, which enhances the cross-channel experience. The approach is also genuinely customer-orientated and aims to create customer-friendly services rather than solely focusing on the lowest price possible. (Frischhut & Stickdorn, 2012, pp. 20-21) Service design can really make a difference in tourism because, for once: “The better your organization understands the overall service experience, the better you can make the experience” (Thompson & Thompson, n.d.). In addition, Stickdorn argued that tourism was an industry that was dominated by service. Therefore it has perpetually been dependant on a high-quality customer experience. (Service Design Network, 2012) This is especially important in a time where tourism is more transparent than ever due to social media and reviews on websites, where one bad customer review can make a difference in success. Consequently, tourism industry should focus on creating great experiences rather than on simple marketing communication. Service design can not only improve current services but also create new, holistic experiences because it is indeed its core interest. (Carew, 2015)

What this amounts to is that customer loyalty programmes have both positive and negative aspects and needs to be managed well in order to minimise those negative points and boost the positive ones. Service design offers tools that can help to improve service in general and in touristic business like Matterhorn Valley Hotels in particular.

2 Short portrait of the three Matterhorn Valley Hotels

The last chapter showed that a lot of research has been done on customer loyalty programmes. Therefore, after having laid out a basis in the last chapter, a short portrait of the three Matterhorn Valley Hotels is presented in order to introduce the hotels as a subject of study. All three hotels (***) below belong to the hotel chain Matterhorn Valley Hotels, which is solely located in Grächen (Valais). (Matterhorn Valley Hotels Franchise GmbH, n.d.)

Hotel & Spa Hannigalp***

This recently renovated hotel is situated in the centre of the village. Belonging to the establishment is a Spa, which offers a Jacuzzi, Sauna, Solarium and massages as well as the only indoor swimming pool in Grächen. (Schweiz Tourismus, 2016a) The hotelier describes the hotel as a family hotel with Wellness and Spa which is situated in the car-free zone of Grächen. It stands for individual holiday experiences in the mountains with an infrastructure for Sport, Wellness and fun (data collected by the author – questionnaire 2016b).

Matterhorn Valley Hotel Desirée ***

Hotel Desirée *** is a family hotel that is situated two minutes from the mountain railway. Furthermore there is a club for children and one for teenagers – both are looked after during the week's evenings. There is also a restaurant which serves local specialities, a beauty salon, sauna, steam bath and solarium. (Schweiz Tourismus, 2016b)

Turm Hotel Grächerhof ***

Turm Hotel as well is centrally located, offers a meeting room and a restaurant with different kinds of diets. Pets are allowed. (Schweiz Tourismus, 2016c) This hotelier describes the hotels with the following attributes: Tower – Alp room, whirlpool, culinary, lounge (data collected by the author – questionnaire 2016b).

The chain where all these three hotels belong to is considerably small but does have a loyalty programme. Due to the wish for a new loyalty programme, it might be constructive to know what is being practised at other hotel chains.

3 Different existing customer loyalty programmes in hotel industry

As remarked above, customer loyalty programmes are a commonly used marketing strategy in hospitality. Therefore, it is helpful to understand different types of hotel chains and of what their loyalty programmes consist of in order to learn and improve the very own customer loyalty programme of Matterhorn Valley Hotels. Below is a discussion of the chosen customer loyalty programmes, the filled in table is available appendix I . In chapter four, more information about the research process can be found.

3.1 Big hotel chains

The list begins with the three biggest hotel chains in the world by room count (according to hotelnewsnow.com): Marriott International / Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Worldwide Holdings and Intercontinental Hotels Group.

Figure 2 Largest Hotels in the world in 2015

10 LARGEST HOTEL COMPANIES BY ROOM COUNT							
		EXISTING		PIPELINE		IF 100% OPEN	
		HOTELS	ROOMS	HOTELS	ROOMS	HOTELS	ROOMS
1	Marriott International / Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide	5,456	1,071,096	2,101	373,000	7,557	1,444,096
2	Hilton Worldwide Holdings	4,480	737,922	1,555	260,000	6,035	997,922
3	Intercontinental Hotels Group	4,963	726,876	1,319	217,709	6,282	944,585
4	Wyndham Hotel Group	7,760	671,900	910	122,800	8,670	794,700
5	Jin Jiang International / Plateno Hotels Group	6,000	640,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: HNN (2015)

It became apparent that all three biggest hotels on this list above (Figure 2) have very diverse and generous customer loyalty programmes (HNN, 2015). As can be seen in appendix I , some hotels do have partners where points can be earned or encashed. For all hotels tested (Marriott, Hilton Worldwide and Intercontinental Hotels Group) points can be earned through Air travel or using the credit card of the prevailing customer loyalty

programme. Intercontinental Hotels Group offers the most possibilities of how to earn points (U.S. News & World Report LP, 2016a), whereas Marriott then offers the most possibilities to encash the accumulated points such as concerts, golf lessons, gift cards and rental cars (U.S. News & World Report LP, 2016b). Concerning the tier-levels it can be said that all of them have at least four levels (Marriott and Hilton), Intercontinental Hotels Group even has six different levels. Moreover, there are countless many different loyalty programme advantages and many of them are available from a very low tier-level. However, all three hotel chains' loyalty programmes' points do expire after a certain time. Also, the rather unpopular black-out-dates ¹ are only an issue to consider at the Hilton Hotels (U.S. News & World Report LP, 2016c).

3.2 Small hotel chains

From the biggest hotel chains to small hotel chains that still offer a customer loyalty programme: This category proved to be quite challenging. What was most noticeable is the restricted possibilities to earn points. Only Sorat Hotels award points for using the Spa, dining at the hotels' restaurants or holding conferences and events. Therefore, it is no surprise that encashing the points is restricted as well. Here again, Sorat Hotels offers – in addition to booking rooms – the possibility to encash points for other hotel expenses or gift cards. Nevertheless, it is the only hotel out of the three not to have several membership levels. (Sorat Hotels Deutschland, 2016) That is the reason why, once joined the programme, bonuses are open to every member, tier-levels do not apply for Amari Hotels & Resorts or Dedeman Hotels & Resorts International. Points do expire at Amari Hotels and Sorat Hotels; Dedeman remains unclear on this concern. Memberships are free in both Dedeman and Sorat Hotels (Valhalla Kreatif Reklam Ajansı, 2015). Blackout dates only apply at Amari Hotels; for the others, it remains unclear (Amari, 2016).

¹ Timespan, when discounts or less expensive rates are not available (blackout dates, 2016)

3.3 Best ranked luxury hotels

The website luxury-branding.com chose the best luxurious hotels in 2015 and came up with the list below in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Best luxury hotel chains

POS	LUXURY HOTEL BRAND	UNITS	BEST	WORST	RANGE	RATING
1	The Ritz-Carlton	90	0.05	54.81	54.77	12.05
2	Oberoi Hotels & Resorts	19	1.71	58.82	57.11	20.96
3	Raffles Hotels & Resorts	12	3.64	93.75	90.11	21.68
4	Langham Hotels and Resorts	17	0.75	219.51	218.76	33.28
5	Rocco Forte Hotels	11	3.73	90.91	87.18	37.17

Source: Schmidt (2015, p. 14)

When comparing the top three hotels, two main remarks can be made:

- Oberoi Hotels & Resorts does not allow “non-members” to learn about any details where their customer loyalty programme is concerned, since the guest has to log in to the member area. Therefore, guests do not have the possibility to join a programme based on what the offers are. (Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, 2016)
- Raffles Hotels & Resorts only allows earning points through booking rooms but, more significantly, those cannot be encashed into new bookings but into better and more attentive services such as 24h flexibility in checking in or out, or guaranteed restaurant reservations in 24 hours. Moreover, tier-levels are not to be found; it seems once people have joined the programme, the advantages are the same no matter how often guests stay at one of the hotels. (FRHI Hotels & Resorts, 2016)

Only the Ritz-Carlton Hotels offer a loyalty programme that resembles those of the largest hotel chains. For instance, there is the possibility to earn points when travelling by plane, booking a room or using offers from other partners. Also, the value of accrued points may be combined with money as a means of payment, which the two other hotels do not allow. There are three tier-levels and there is no registration fee. However, the points do expire at some point as well. Unfortunately, there are no details where black-out dates are concerned. (The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C., 2016)

One explanation for these different approaches might be the greater importance of exceptional service rather than prices since these are all luxury hotels. But also people are willing to pay a higher price anyway, so price discounts might not work that well. Therefore, other bonuses and incentives must be found as to attract the high-end guests.

3.4 Best Independent hotel associations

A rather new phenomenon are independent hotels that offer a joint loyalty programme that increase the competition in the hotel scene (Independent Digital News and Media Ltd., 2011). The chosen hotel associations, which are about to be compared, were found in an article from Steele on thepointsguy.com (2016). One advantage of these associations might be the versatile hotels that ensure a new hotel experience every time a guest travels to another hotel within the same loyalty programme association. Whereas Stash is the only loyalty programme with its own credit card, it does not have different tier-levels. Further, the points do not expire and it is one of few hotels (in this comparison) that does not have blackout dates. (RevPAR Collective, Inc., 2016) However, the possibilities to earn points are restricted to this credit card and room bookings, whereas iPrefer and Voilà Hotels added Spa treatments and dining to the list. iPrefer even lets guest collect points through Air travel (U.S. News & World Report LP, 2016d). On the other hand, Voilà Hotels offers more ways to encash the accumulated points such as gift cards, purchases at retail partners and donations to charities (Hospitality Marketing Concepts, 2016).

3.5 Swiss hotel chains

Eventually, what Swiss hotel chains' loyalty programmes are offering is addressed. This search also turned out to be challenging because there are only few Swiss hotel chains that do not belong to bigger international chains. Hotel chains like Giardino Group Superior Hotels and Resorts or Tschuggen Hotel Group do not offer any loyalty programme. The only hotel chain that was found with a loyalty programme was Sunstar Swiss Hotels.

The system is rather simple. There are no points to collect, the system is based on how many times the customer stays at Sunstar Hotels. After having stayed two times, the first level is reached. The levels are the following: Alpenrose (after two stays), Enzian (after 50 stays), Edelweiss (after 150 stays) and Bergkristall (after 250 stays). For each level, there are different discounts of which the value corresponds with the levels reached. (Sunstar Hotels

Management AG, n.d.) There are discounts on a room or on package deals, on products from the hotel shop, cruises and rental cars (which are booked at the travel agency Privilège) and wine from Schuler St. Jakobs winery. Further, there is a discount on Sorat Hotels and purchases at teakland.ch as well as late check outs when having reached the highest level (Bergkristall). Other perks of the programme: when having reached Bergkristall-level, the certain discounts are also offered on three other rooms; at Edelweiss-level there is a gift when reaching a new level and no fees in case of a cancellation. (Sunstar Hotels Management AG, n.d.) However, it is unclear if points, or rather “stays”, do expire, if there is a registration fee or if there are blackout dates (appendix I).

4 Methodology

After having shown what has been written about customer loyalty programmes, service design was introduced and an overview of different hotel chain categories' loyalty programmes was given. Now, the methodology is discussed in the following order: presenting and describing what methods were used (the basis research methods and recapping the service design methods from chapter 1.2.2), how these methods were put to use, justification of these methods used, presenting the obstacles faced before and during the study and eventually, limitation of this study.

4.1 Description of methods

This paper is a case study, whose aim it was to produce an action plan for MVH's new loyalty programme. It was conducted over the timespan of several months, where both existing and newly generated data were analysed. For obtaining this new data, service design tools were used (chapter 1.2.2). The existing data was gathered mostly through online research. All information contributed to the action plan in chapter seven. That ought to propose the way to a new loyalty programme.

4.1.1 Research for basic information

First of all, basic information was needed to gain an overview over the whole subject matter of this study:

- **Research for secondary resources:** Firstly, it was necessary to gain an overview over the whole topic of both customer loyalty programmes and service design. For this, online research for academic papers and articles was mainly employed. Google Scholar proved to be a helpful search engine. Furthermore, books about marketing as well as service design were sought out and borrowed from different University libraries.
- **Research for short portraits of MVH:** the information for chapter two was gathered through online research. Also, a statement from the hoteliers about the hotels (question in questionnaire 2016b, appendix VI) was added.
- **Research for existing customer loyalty programmes:** First, different hotel chain categories were defined. Then lists or assessments of e.g. the biggest hotel chains were traced. A list of different comparing points was formulated that was completed during

the examination of the different customer loyalty programmes. This list was used for creating a table which gives an overview over various loyalty programmes.

4.1.2 Service design tools

The newly generated data was produced with several service design tools, which have already been introduced in chapter 1.2.2, and follow a four-step methodology.

1. Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology is the first out of four steps in service design. The aim is to understand the daily habits and rituals, which form social codes in a certain environment — in this study the three hotels. This knowledge is required for an authentic simulation when staging the service in step three. Site visits, immersion work and semi-directed interviews are possible tools in this step. (Fraginière & Sitten, 2012) In this study, immersions, a short interview as well as two questionnaires were conducted in order to gain information inter alia, about those social codes at MVH.

Immersion: this is a tool, as already mentioned in chapter 1.2.2, where observation provides insight in the every day's service process and environment of a business. Even little details might drastically influence the whole of a service performance and therefore, a valuable tool for this study as well.

Questionnaires: Although not being introduced as a “pure” service design tool, questionnaires were used. In questionnaire 2016a, the guests were surveyed by posing solely quantitative questions which seemed more convenient when surveying a bigger group. Questionnaire 2016b contained both quantitative questions (e.g. assessing current loyalty programme) and qualitative questions (e.g. what should be improved when thinking about the current programme). Since the opinions of all hoteliers mattered, a questionnaire appeared to produce the general survey of a rather complex topic.

Interview: The interview was semi-directed and conducted by phone. The questions that arose during step one were to be answered through this method.

2. Scripting

Once the first step was accomplished, the scripting method *blueprinting* was used – a tool for visualising the service chains' issues, weaknesses as well as strengths (Frischhut & Stickdorn, 2012, p. 19). Basically, the blueprints constructed were designed in a grid, the scenarios are based on the findings in step one. Different service-providers were sought out and organised vertically. Important is to consider what is visible (placed above line of visibility) and what is not (below line of visibility). Vertically, there are pre-transaction (before actual service happens), transaction (actual service is provided) and post-transaction (after service was given). Figure 4 below shows a model of such a blueprint-grid.

Figure 4 Model of a blueprint

	Pre-transaction	transaction	Post-transaction
Visible service			
Line of visibility			
Invisible service			

Source: author's data

3. Staging

This step is to test the blueprints and make issue within the service chain visible and more concrete. The aim is not to create a perfect play but rather to make potential issues visible that might have a negative influence on the service performance. Based on the blueprints in step two, this method provides an opportunity to examine the current service but also ideas on how to improve and adjust the service. This might take as long as the service reaches the highest level possible.

4. Production

The last step is where all findings and ideas are implemented.

4.2 Research design

After having described the methods used in this study, the way of employing these methods are discussed. Starting with research for basic information, service design follows.

4.2.1 Employing basic information

The secondary resources mostly contributed to the literature review but can also be found in other chapters as well. Serving as the academic foundation, assessments and propositions for improvement (action plan in chapter seven) could be made and easier justified. The short portraits about MVH facilitate the understanding of this study's environment. As for the list of different customer loyalty programmes in hotel chains, the aim was to gain an overview what is offered by whom. Not intending to copy other programmes, it served as inspiration and guideline.

4.2.2 Employing service design

After discussion how these basic info was employed, now to the employment of the service design methods:

1. Ethnomethodology

Immersion: this method was slightly adapted due to the fact that an immersion directly at the hotel would not have delivered unbiased results. The reason being the presence of observers could have had either influenced the behaviour of guests and receptionists or even caused irritation and insecurity. Therefore, the information about the current loyalty programme was gathered online and clarified by the additional information given by David Graefen (e-mail) and Olivier Andenmatten (phone interview). The transcription of this interview was not analysed and discussed closer but is available in appendix III.

However, three other on-site immersions were conducted. The choice of businesses was based on the attempt to compare three various businesses, offering different products and customer loyalty programmes. Therefore, a guideline with several points was prepared so that the three programmes could be compared with each other (appendix II), before the immersions took place. The situations chosen were based on daily business of the prevailing business. The gleaned results then were used for the recommendations, and consequently, the action plan.

Questionnaires: a tremendous part of this was gathered through the two questionnaires 2016a and 2016b since it is a rather convenient way of gathering information about a big group of people such as the MVH-guests. Producing this newly generated data was supposed to help to comprehend what both guests and hoteliers thought about the current loyalty programme as well as hoped for the future loyalty programme. Therefore, the questionnaire 2016a's link was embedded into the newsletter of Matterhorn Valley Hotels and sent to all people who subscribed for it. This questionnaire was then accessible from 25th of August to 1st of October 2016, the 115 answers given (in questionnaire 2016a) were treated anonymously. To motivate their guests to fill in the questionnaire, MVH created a prize draw. The prize was a two-night stay (for two people) at one of the hotels.

- **Customer questionnaire 2016a:** the survey's questions' aim was to answer the following objective: *Identify what the Matterhorn Valley's customers' expectations and wishes for the customer loyalty programme are.* All the questions (except the question for availability for another questionnaire) in this research were first evaluated, then analysed and interpreted. Eventually, this interpretation was used for the recommendations and the creation of an action plan.
- **Hotelier questionnaire 2016b:** the aim of this questionnaire answered the objective: *Identify what the hoteliers are hoping to achieve with their customer loyalty programme.* The link was sent to the three hoteliers. Also, there was the question if hoteliers would be available for any further questions. The hotelier who answered the survey first agreed to answer potential questions as well. Therefore, Olivier Andenmatten was chosen, when additional information (interview) was necessary for the immersion. The intent for creating this survey was the intention to satisfy not only the guests (questionnaire 2016a) but also the hoteliers, since hoteliers are in the front-line and deal with their guests on a daily basis. Therefore, their expertise might be very helpful when it comes to their customers. This information as well was used in the process of designing the action plan.
- **Interview:** the interview was based on questions that arose during the research for basic information. The questions asked can be found in appendix III. The interview was conducted over phone due to convenience and served in the scripting and of staging.

2. Scripting

Playing an important part in service design, the blueprints' subject was the registration process of the loyalty programme. The reason for this choice was the intention to uncover the consequences of different registering process. Two problematic scenarios were detected and a possible solution for the first two scenarios elaborated (description in chapter 5.4).

3. Staging

Since this study aimed to create an action plan, the staging exercise was to test what difference the timing when offering the programme, makes. However, high standards were to be achieved. Thus, Design of Touristic Products and Services (DETOPS) students from Emmanuel Fragnière at HES-SO Valais-Wallis staged the scenarios — two problematic scenarios and a possible solution. Two sessions were held, one in the morning (with the morning class) and one in the afternoon (with the afternoon class), where all three scenarios were staged. However, in the afternoon session, the third scenario was slightly adapted to a suggestion from one student.

4. Production

The final step was to answer the following objective: *create an action plan to help Matterhorn Valley Hotels to find a suitable customer loyalty programme*, for which all the found data was put to use to develop with recommendations that in the end were transmitted into the action plan.

4.3 Justification of methods

Why use tools of service design in context of a customer loyalty programme?

As mentioned above, service design includes a lot of different tools from various research fields in order to analyse, create and produce the best service possible. With these many different tools, the service can be analysed and examined on various levels which helps to ensure that the service satisfies the needs from both supplier and customer.

Why is it used in this study?

Creating a customer loyalty programme is rather of complex in nature and its success depends solely on how the customer perceives its value. If they do not perceive the value as worthwhile, the loyalty programme is pointless. Since the service design's focus lies indeed on

the customers' needs, it warrants that it could heighten the chance of finding usable results. Further, it might show an alternative way of gathering data in the hotel industry.

4.4 Issues

Fortunately, there were only few issues that had to be dealt with during this study. One issue was how to exactly conduct the immersions. However, after a consultation with Emmanuel Fragnière it was decided not to have on-site immersions taking place (at the hotel) but at several other places (that offer loyalty programmes). The online immersion then produced the needed information about the current loyalty programme. Another worrying point was the staging experiment because it was unclear how and what exactly to stage. This as well was solved after another consultation with the adviser, who allowed to stage the experiment with his students. This led to the positive outcome of a constructive discussion between the students and the author that is documented in chapter 5.5. The fact that the hoteliers did not meet the due date given by Graefen for filling in the questionnaire 2016b was solved by sending two reminders. In the end, all three hoteliers filled in the questionnaire. Another difficulty was Google forms' presentation of results, which was not quite up to standards. Therefore, all the data had to be transferred into Excel in order to produce readable graphs that are easily understood. Overall, these were minor complications. So, they did not affect the working progress excessively and the necessary results were produced, which are subject of the next chapters (five, six and seven) to come.

4.5 Limitations of the methodology

Even though a holistic view was produced with the various service design tools, there were limitations as well. In this study, questionnaire 2016b might have turned out to produce only limited findings. However this study focused more on the guests' opinion and wishes because in the end, it is them who needs to perceive the value of such a programme. Furthermore, site visits were not included due to time limitations and doubts about a significant impact on the outcome of this study. Therefore, site visits were substituted in favour of all the methods used and discussed above. Although, an analysis of interviews with guests, hoteliers and maybe even local people could have offered an even more detailed insight. This could be considered if this study should ever be continued.

5 Presentation and discussion of results

The findings resulting from the methods introduced in the last chapter are now presented and discussed. The results follow the steps of service design and start with ethnomethodology (Immersion, questionnaire 2016a and 2016b), scripting (blueprints) and staging. The production is going to be discussed in a separate chapter.

5.1 Immersions

As explained earlier, immersions are used to gain insight into a service or area of a business. In chapter 5.1, the author immersed into the current loyalty programme of MVH in order to comprehend the situation and have a basis to work with. Further, three other immersions were done with the aim of broadening the horizon on different loyalty programmes.

5.1.1 Current customer loyalty programme of Matterhorn Valley Hotel

The current customer loyalty programme was examined regarding the access to the programme, registration process, criteria to join, programme offers, tier-levels, member area, follow up, issues with the programme and the aims for a new programme.

Access to customer loyalty programme

In order to find the customer loyalty programme, the guest has to open the website of MVH, not the individual website of one of the three hotels. Furthermore, there is no direct link from those hotel websites to the customer loyalty programme. However, Olivier Andenmatten (appendix III) said in the interview that such a direct link from the hotel-websites would certainly be a possibility (O. Andenmatten, hotelier Hotel & Spa Hannigalp, personal communication, 26 September 2016).

Registration process

It is the hoteliers' responsibility to inquire about the guests' desire to register for the customer loyalty programme as well as to explain what it is exactly and its advantages (D. Graefen, dcg consultant, personal communication, 14 September 2016). Andenmatten confirmed that for a certain period of time the loyalty cards were handed out after a stay of two to three nights (O. Andenmatten, PC, 26 September 2016). Apparently, this meant a constant stress firstly, because the printer (which printed the name on the card) was highly expensive, and secondly, because the loyalty programme did not increase the

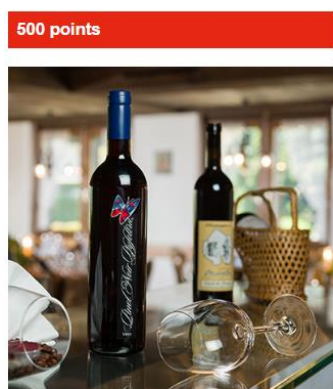
revenue. Furthermore, the printer did not work properly, time was lost and customers had to wait. Another issue with the process was that some cards could not be identified anymore because the task of completing the registration had been forgotten by the hotel staff. So, hoteliers stopped actively handing out loyalty cards. At present, the clients can either register in person at the hotel (but have to ask for it) or can do so online (appendix III, question one). The printer is no longer used for writing the customers' names on the card; instead, names are handwritten. The card's code then needs to be registered, which is an additional expenditure of time and that is why there were issues with the unidentified cards mentioned in appendix III. (O. Andenmatten, PC, 26 September 2016)

Criteria to join

According to Graefen (PC, 14 September 2016), there are no criteria for a guest to join the programme. It is in the receptionists' estimation if the programme is offered in person or not. This might be the reason why there are so many people who once joined the programme but do not actively use it. However, on the website of Matterhorn Valley Hotels, everybody can join for free with only a few clicks. Yet as mentioned above, at one time cards were given to customers after having stayed for two or three nights. It seems that there has not been any other criteria, yet this inconsistency offers an explanation for such many inactive members.

Programme offers

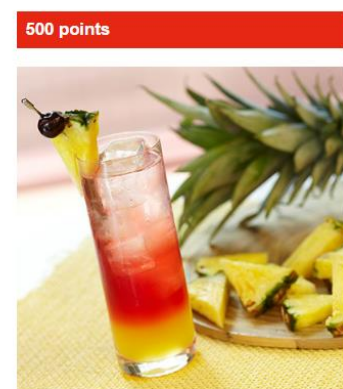
Figure 5 Website print screen: customer loyalty programme offers



A glass of fine Valais wine or a glass of prosecco, accompanied by an amuse bouche at the Hotel Landhaus La Collina



Le Chalet ice-cream sundae at Restaurant Le Chalet at Hotel Desirée



A mix drink or a glass of fine Valais wine of your choice in the lounge bar of the Tower Hotel Grächerhof

Source: Matterhorn Valley Hotels Franchise GmbH (n.d.)

Once the guest is a member, the offers of the programme are listed on the website (Figure 5) but cannot be encashed online. Encashing has to be organised on-site. The following is offered (Table 2):

Table 2 Loyalty programme offers

500 points:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A glass Prosecco or local wine, served with an Amuse bouche - Le Chalet ice-cream sundae - A glass of local wine or a mixed drink
2000 points:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to the private Spa of Hotel & Spa Hannigalp - Ski-maintenance - 10% discount on everything you consume in one of the Hotel restaurants
5000 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 50% discount on the stay including breakfast - One free night after a stay of 7 nights
Other offers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other special offers are announced here or in the members' area

Source: Matterhorn Valley Hotels Franchise GmbH (n.d.)

Different tier-levels

Figure 6 Website print screen: tier-levels of the customer loyalty programme

Advantages and services

Earn points while having fun – it doesn't get much better. You will receive one point for every Franc spent on everything you enjoy during your stay at our hotel and in our restaurants.

Friends card – for loyal guests of the Matterhorn Valley Hotels

- Welcome aperitif on arrival
- Upgrade to the next room category for free, subject to availability
- 1,000 extra points when you book your stay online at www.matterhornvalleyhotels.ch

Ambassador card – because recommendations are worth it!

- After making three bookings or staying four times in one year, you'll receive the Ambassador card as a thank you, which you can use to enjoy the following benefits:
 - For every booking resulting from your recommendation, you'll receive a voucher for 1,500 points
 - Daily happy hour for free between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. in our restaurants for you and your invited guests
 - 10% discount on all your hotel bookings
 - 10% discount on all meals and beverages consumed in our restaurants

Family card – especially for our small and large families

- Welcome aperitif on arrival
- Children up to the age of 12 can stay for free in their parents' room during the off-season
- Soft drinks are free for the children with every meal

Source: Matterhorn Valley Hotels Franchise GmbH (n.d.)

At first appearance, it seems as if Matterhorn Valley Hotels had a three-tier level programme. But after a closer examination, it is a two-tier programme with an extra card especially for families. Although the different cards are listed, it is not entirely clear how one can reach the next level in the loyalty programme. The advantages of each level is listed in Figure 6.

Member area

Figure 7 shows the member area, where only the loyalty card members have access. Here, the count of points is displayed. Further, there are “my rewards”, “transactions”, “my data” and “support”. So, the member area is rather administrative and gives an overview of the accumulated points and how to use them. One drawback is the fact that it is not mobile responsively designed – which basically means that the layout adapts to the screen of a mobile phone or tablet (Byers, 2012).

Figure 7 Member area of the loyalty programme



Source: Matterhorn Valley Hotels Franchise GmbH (n.d.)

Follow up

There is a follow up for loyalty programme members (appendix III, question six) which is released when the guests check out. It consists of an e-mail with a little survey. However, according to Andenmatten, this is tricky as well because the text cannot be adapted and updated very easily. In order to be of any use, it ought to be more user-friendly for the hotels. (O. Andenmatten, PC, 26 September 2016)

Issues with current programme

According to Graefen, one massive problem is the number of inactive members (PC, 14 September 2016). Andenmatten (PC, 26 September 2016) further mentioned the issues of cost-intensity, a complicated system and the programme not being innovative enough. In addition, it became obvious in the interview that the whole process of printing cards and registration was exasperating and irritating; the problem being that the loyalty programme took too much time while all the other daily tasks still had to be completed. (O. Andenmatten, PC, 26 September 2016)

Aim for new loyalty programme

According to Andenmatten, the hoteliers wish for a programme that motivates the guests to stay at a Matterhorn Valley Hotel, once they come to Grächen. So, the loyalty programme is supposed to “prepare” the guests to choose one of these three hotels instead of other hotels in Grächen. (O. Andenmatten, PC, 26 September 2016)

5.1.2 Three immersions of other loyalty programmes

Three immersions were conducted and transcribed in three different places. Additional information was first gathered to complete the insight, then the immersions are presented: The third loyalty programme was more complicated and therefore its discussion is more detailed. The three loyalty programmes are the following: Cumulus Card (Migros), Bahnhof Apotheke and Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG) Rewards Club.

Cumulus Card

- How to register?

The customers can register online.

- Who can register?

Everybody can register for the programme.

- How to earn points

For every purchase, points can be earned when handing over the customer loyalty card. To earn 1 point, 100 CHF need to be spent. Six times a year, vouchers with a

certain value (depending on the amount spent) are sent to the customers that can be encashed. (Migros-Genossenschaft, 2016)

- Where to earn and encash points?
 - Migros
 - Do it + Garden Migros
 - Migrolino
 - melectronics
 - OBI
 - Migros Ferien
 - SportXX
 - LeShop.ch
 - Depot
 - Outdoor by SportXX
 - Ex Libris
 - Migros Partner
 - Micasa
 - Migrol

- Other partners for earning points
 - Migros Bank
 - Migros Photo Service
 - Eurocentres
 - Cumulus-MasterCard
 - m-way
 - Sharoo
 - Mobility
 - Interhome

(Migros-Gemeinschaft, 2016)

- What if the card is left at home?
Unfortunately, in this case the points cannot be credited later and are lost.

- Immersions

Table 3 Immersion 1 into Migros' loyalty programme Cumulus

Immersion no. 1	<i>Seftigen, at home,</i>	<i>14. 09.2016</i>	<i>15.30 o'clock</i>
Topic: How to register			
I goggled "Cumulus Karte" and the option: register came right up. Only little information was needed such as:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First and second name - Address - Date of birth - How many people live in the household - If a Migros Magazine is wanted - If one want to join the cooperative - If information about the credit card from Migros is wanted 			

After filling in all the boxes, all that was left to do was push the send button.

Next, a window opened, informing that the card was going to be delivered by post in the next two weeks and that all further questions were answered at the “cumulus-Infoline”.

Source: E. Lörtscher, student, personal experience (14 April 2016)

Table 4 Immersion 2 into Migros' loyalty programme Cumulus

Immersion no. 2	<i>Bern, Migros Marktgasse</i>	<i>15.09.2016</i>	<i>16.00 o'clock</i>
Topic:	How to use		
<p>I went to buy a bottle of water. I first joined the queue of a normal register but then changed to a self-service register since it took so long. There, I simply scanned the bottle and was automatically asked if I had a Cumulus Card with me (which I had not since I ordered it only one day earlier), or had some vouchers or discounts. Unfortunately, customers lose the Cumulus points if they do not have the card with them. So, the same happened to me.</p>			

Source: E. Lörtscher, student, PC (15 September 2016)

Bahnhof Apotheke (Feelgood's Apotheken)

- How to register

As a customer, one is dependent on the sales personnel to ask about the interest in joining the programme. If yes, the short leaflet is filled in right there at the store and registered with a bar code.

- Who can register?

Customers who are invited to join by the sales personnel

- How to earn points?

For every purchase, the customer can show the customer loyalty card and receives points according to what was spent. At the end of every quarter — provided that a certain amount of money was spent — a voucher is sent to the customer which then can be encashed.

- Where to earn points?
At every pharmacy that is a “Feelgood’s Apotheken” member.
- What if the card is left at home?
When the card is left at home, the customer can tell the sales personnel which then look for the customer detail in the system by asking for the name and address. Like this, points will not be lost solely because the customer cannot show the loyalty card.
- Immersion

Table 5 Immersion into the loyalty programme of Feelgood’s Apotheke

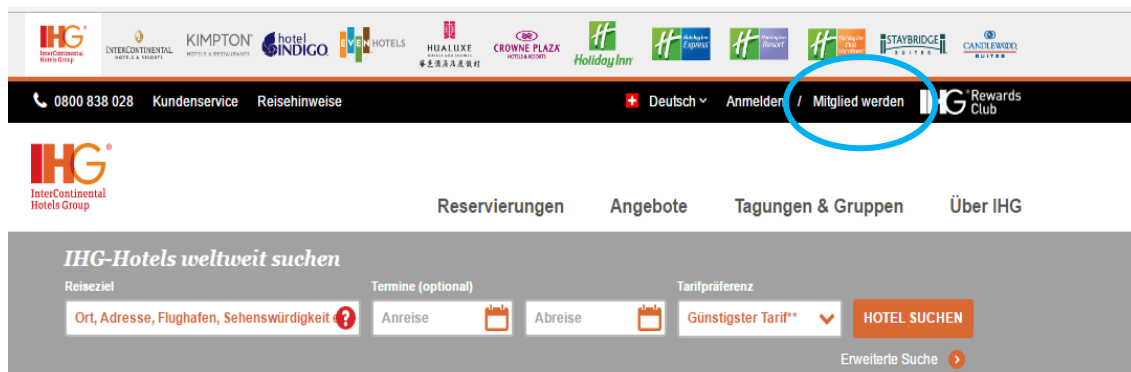
Immersion no. 1	Thun,	27.09.2016
Topic: Making a purchase		
<p>The aim of this immersion was to find out if the sales personnel of the pharmacy Bahnhof Apotheke in Thun would ask for the loyalty card themselves or if the customer had to prompt them. So, after asking for the medicine, the pharmacist herself asked if I was a member of the programme and if I had the card with me. After scanning the card’s barcode, the points were credited. I paid for my purchase and the pharmacist wished me a nice day.</p>		

Source: E. Lörtscher, student, PC (27 September 2016)

IHG Rewards Club

- How to register
Online on website: One way to register is to visit the website of IHG Rewards Club as shown in Figure 8. In the right upper corner is the possibility to become a member (“Mitglied werden“, blue circle). Here, people can fill in the form with their personal details and push the button “Mitglied werden”. (Six Continents Hotels, Inc., 2016a)

Figure 8 IHG website in order to register



Source: IHG (2016a)

- Who can register?

Everybody can register for it since registering is free.

- How to earn points?

Points can be earned in different ways:

- Hotel stays
- IHG Rewards Club credit card
- Holding conferences and meetings at one of the many hotels

Value of one US-Dollar: As Figure 9 below shows, for most hotels, one US-Dollar equals 10 points. Only two hotels – namely Staybridge Suites and Candlewood Suites – give five points for one US-Dollar. Further, one of the many partner hotels (Kimpton Hotels) is not on this graphic. The reason for this is that it only became part of the IHG brand recently, and is not yet part of the IHG Reward Club. For Kimpton hHotels, Karma Reward – their own loyalty programme – rules. (Six Continents Hotels, Inc., 2016b)

Figure 9 Bonus structure of IHG Rewards Club



Source: IHG (2016b)

- Where to earn and encash points?

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| - Intercontinental | - Holiday Inn | - Staybridge Suites |
| - Hualuxe | - Holiday Inn Express | - Candlewood Suites |
| - Crown Plaza | - Holiday Inn Resort | - Holiday Inn Club Vacation |
| - Hotel Indigo | - Even Hotels | |

Further, points can be purchased, which has the positive effect that members actually can use their points even when the balance is very low. (Six Continents Hotels, Inc., 2016c)

- Other partners for earning points

- | | |
|----------|--------------|
| - Avis | - GroundLink |
| - Budget | - Hertz |

(Six Continents Hotels, Inc., 2016d)

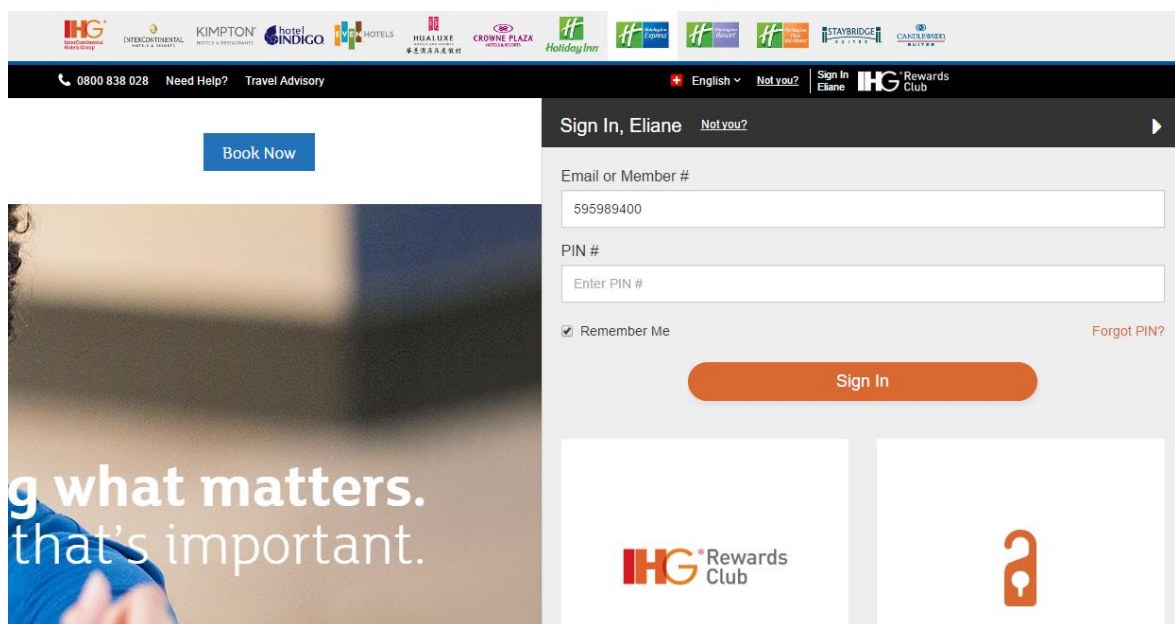
- Partners to encash
Many airlines, such as Air New Zealand, British Airways, Emirates, Etihad Airways or Qantas Airlines.
- What if the card is left at home?
Since all the bookings can be done online, the card is not needed during the stay. However, it is needed to log in (on the website or App) because there is a member number (nine- digit code in the lower right corner of the card in Figure 10) on the card that is needed in addition to a personal pin code. These two codes are inserted in a window like in Figure 11.

Figure 10 Rewards Club Card



Source: author's data

Figure 11 Log in on one of the hotels' websites



Source: IHG (2016c)

- Immersions

Table 6 Immersion 1 into IHG Rewards Club

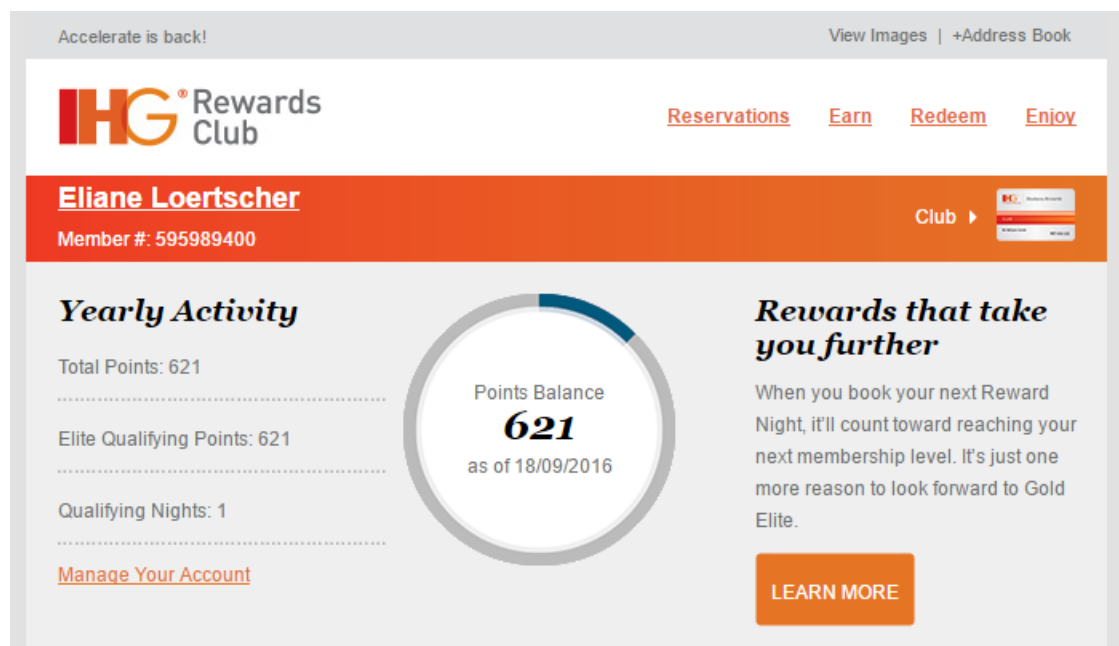
Immersion no. 1	Dublin,	18.04.2016
Topic:	Register during the booking	
<p>Another way to register is to do so when booking a room. That is what I did when looking for the least expensive hotel at Dublin Airport. So the motive was definitely saving money and not joining the rewards Club in particular. But since joining was for free, there was no hesitation to join in order to get the good deal on offer.</p>		

Source: E. Lörtscher, student, PC (18 April 2016)

Table 7 Immersion 2 into IHG Rewards Club

Immersion no. 2	Ireland and Switzerland	from 18.04.2016
Topic:	E-mail updates	
<p>Every month, there is an update about the point balance and yearly activity like it is shown in Figure 12 below. It keeps the members informed and further, keeps reminding them of the programme. Positive about that might be the motivating effect on members to book again one of the hotels. However, receiving all those e-mails might be a nuisance to some people, too.</p>		

Figure 12 IHG Reward Club e-mail concerning point balance



Source: E. Lörtscher, student, PC (18 April 2016)

Source: E. Lörtscher, student, PC (18 April 2016)

Table 8 Immersion 3 into IHG Rewards Club

Immersion no. 3	Switzerland 19.09.2016
<p>Topic: <i>Extra information and deals</i></p> <p>An e-mail was sent on 9th of September 2016 (Figure 13) containing information about the possibility to download the IHG App. There was an incentive for all members who do so: 500 bonus points. If a stay is booked before 31th of December 2016, there will be an additional 1,000 bonus points credited. When clicking on the button “Download Now”, the window opened, which is shown in Figure 14.</p>	<p><i>Figure 13 Additional information via e-mail</i></p> <p><i>Start your Appy travels today</i></p> <p>Dear Eliane,</p> <p>Download the IHG® App and sign in using your membership number to receive 500 bonus points. Then book via the app and stay before 31 December to receive an additional 1,000 bonus points. Our handy IHG® App is your travel companion every step of the way;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get instant access to over 5,000 hotels, in over 100 countries • Manage your bookings on the go • Access your virtual membership card at any time • View your most recent points activity and balance, plus redeem points when booking <p>Source: E. Lörtscher, student, PC (19 September 2016)</p>
<p>Since I did not want to receive a link (Figure 14 below) I just went directly to “Google play” and downloaded the App and logged in as suggested in the e-mail. Having done this, the points were not credited immediately and it was not entirely clear when exactly the promised points would be in the account. After logging out and in several times, the balance still had not changed.</p>	

Figure 14 IHG App link for downloading the App

The screenshot shows the IHG website's mobile app download page. At the top, the IHG logo is on the left, and navigation links for Reservations, Offers, Meetings and Events, and About IHG are on the right. A red banner reads "The IHG® App". Below this, a headline states: "The IHG App makes it easier than ever to **find, book and manage** your stay." A sub-headline says "Send a download link to your device." There are two input fields: "Mobile Phone (Country)" with a dropdown arrow and "Mobile Number". A red "SEND LINK" button is below the fields. A disclaimer reads: "Standard message and data rates may apply. We will not use your information for marketing purposes." To the right is an illustration of a hand holding a smartphone displaying the app interface, with a speech bubble saying "Manage upcoming stays" and a "68" badge. Below the illustration, it says "Download the IHG® App now!" and shows "Available on the App Store" and "ANDROID APP ON Google play" logos. A star rating of 4.5 is shown, with the text "Rating: 4+ Average App Store Rating".

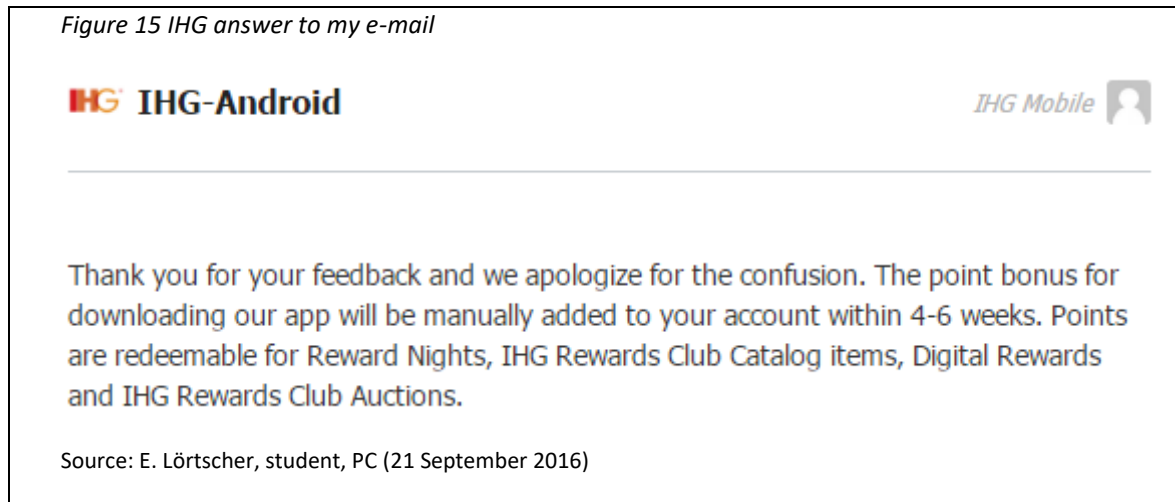
Source: IHG (2016d)

Source: E. Lörtscher, student, PC (19 September 2016)

Table 9 Immersion 5 into IHG Rewards Club

Immersion no. 4	Switzerland	21.09.2016
Topic:	<i>Logging in to receive the promised bonus points</i>	
<p>Even two days after having downloaded the App and logging out and in, the promised points still had not been added to the account. Further, there were no indicators what might be the problem and therefore, as an ordinary customer, there was no chance of understanding the reasons why it did not work. Due to not understanding what exactly went wrong, I wrote an e-mail to the support team of IHG and on 26th of September I received the following answer (Figure 15):</p>		

Figure 15 IHG answer to my e-mail



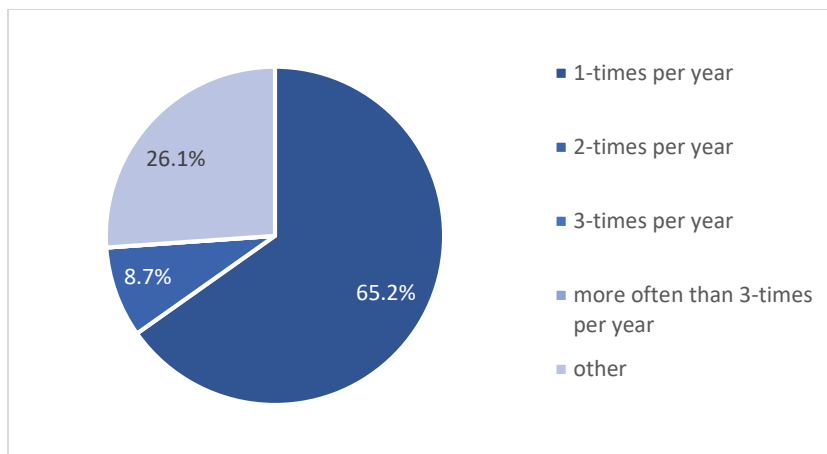
Source: E. Lörtscher, student, PC (21 September 2016)

5.2 Overview of data questionnaire a

Questionnaire 2016a was answered by 115 newsletter receivers. The original questionnaire can be found in appendix V. The results of this questionnaire are discussed below after the presentation of each question (that was asked) and a diagram that shows the results graphically.

How often are you in Grächen on average?

Figure 16 Average stays in Grächen per year

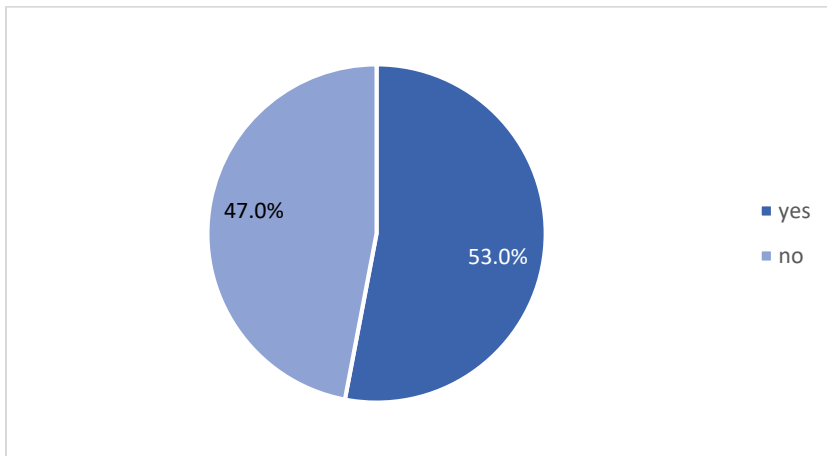


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

65.2% of the participants declared to be in Grächen only once per year and 26.1% answered with “other”. Only 8.7% declared to visit Grächen twice a year, on average. None of the participants claimed to visit Grächen three times per year or more often (Figure 16).

Do you know the customer loyalty programme of Matterhorn Valley Hotels?

Figure 17 Prominence of the current loyalty programme

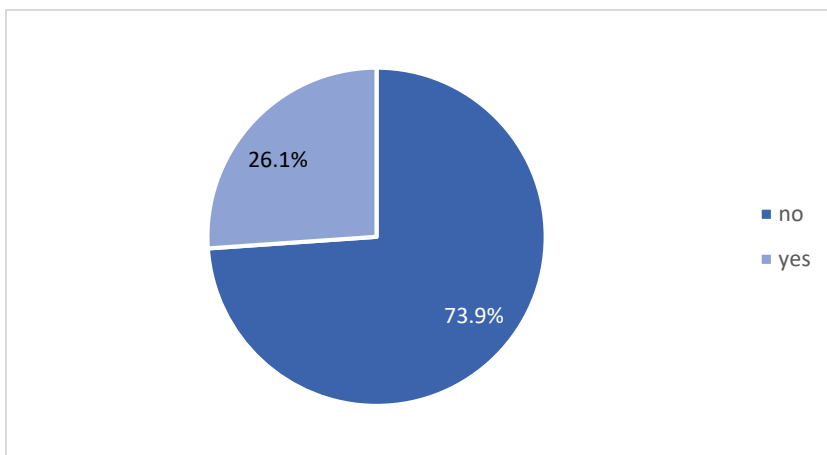


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

53% answered this question with “Yes”, the other 47% with “No” (Figure 17).

Do you have a loyalty card?

Figure 18 Possession of the loyalty card of Matterhorn Valley Hotels

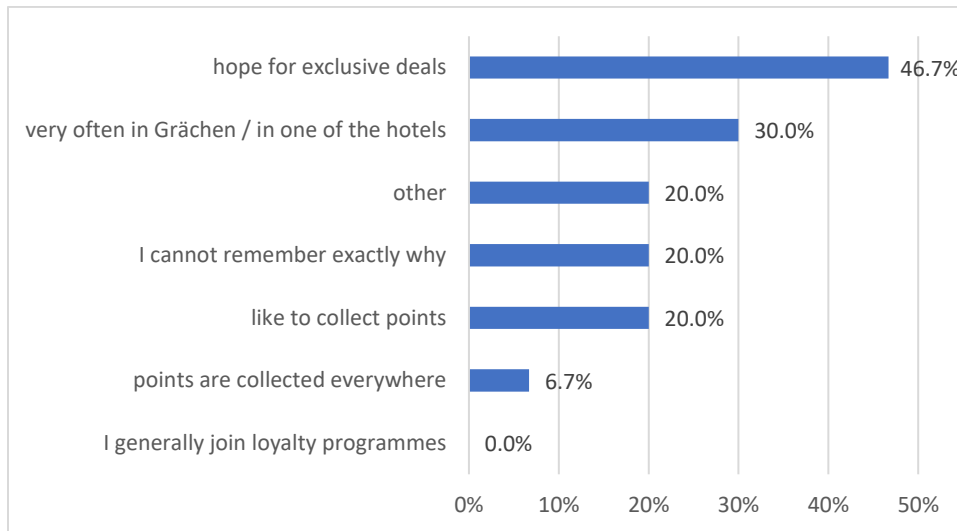


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

The results in Figure 18 show that 73.9% were not in possession of a loyalty card. Only 26.1% of the participants said that they had a customer loyalty card. Referring to the answers given, the following questions were posed:

- If yes, what are the reasons?
(multiple answers possible)

Figure 19 What are the reasons guests' have a loyalty card?

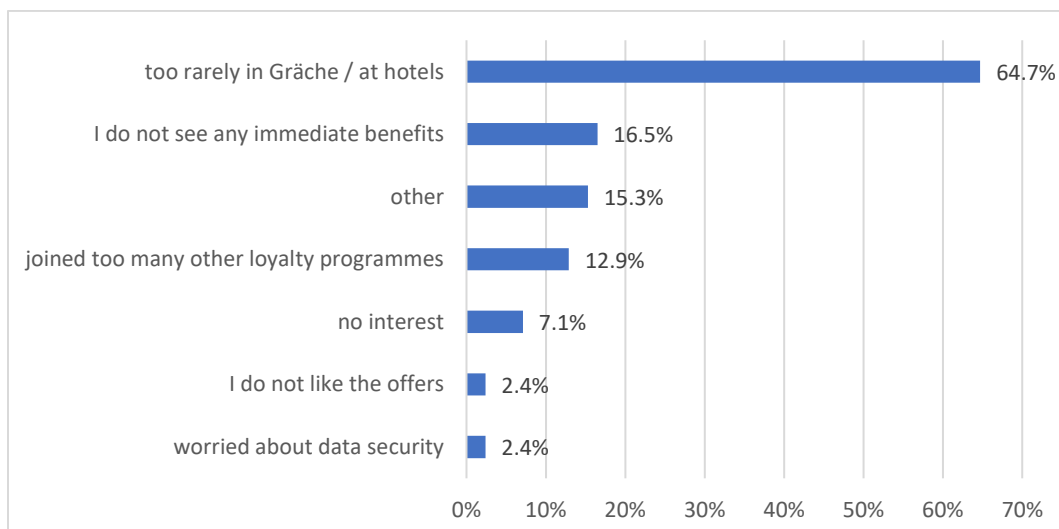


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

46.7% of the participants were hoping for exclusive benefits when joining the customer loyalty programme, 30% because they were staying very often at one of the hotels, 20% like to collect points, 20% do not exactly the reason why they joined and 20% chose “other reasons”. Only 6.7% did have a customer card because points are gathered everywhere today (Figure 19).

- If not, what are the reasons?
(multiple answers possible)

Figure 20 What are the reasons for not having a loyalty card?

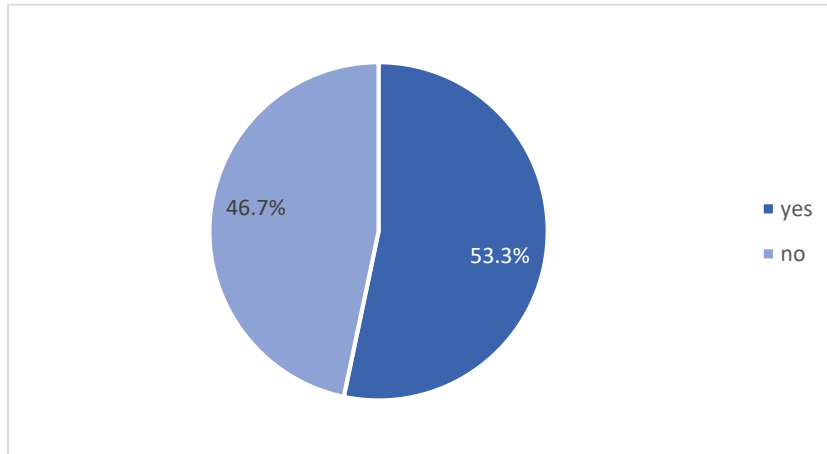


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

In Figure 20, 64.7% of the participants think that they were in Grächen to rarely. 16.5% did not see an immediate benefit from the programme and 15.3% chose the option of “other reasons”. However, only 2.4% of the participants were concerned about data protection.

Do you encash your points?

Figure 21 Are the points encashed?

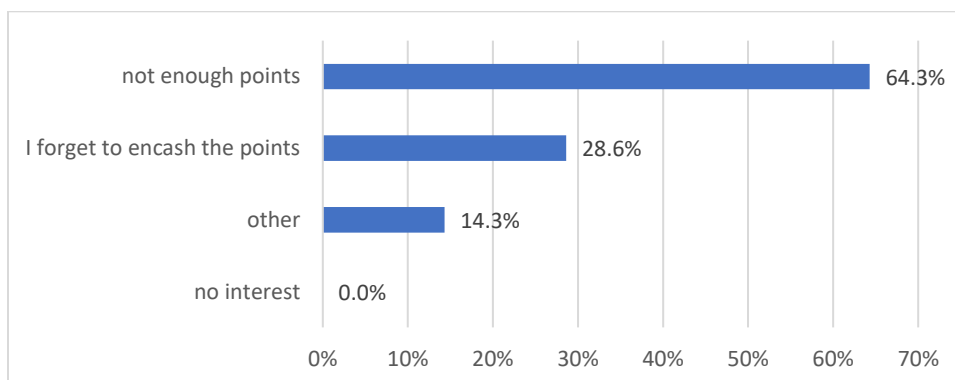


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

Interestingly, almost half of the participants in the survey did not encash their points (Figure 22). Only 53.3% did use their points. The question below was only available for the 46.7% that claimed not to encash their points.

- If no, what are the reasons?
(multiple answers possible)

Figure 22 What are the reasons for not encashing points



Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

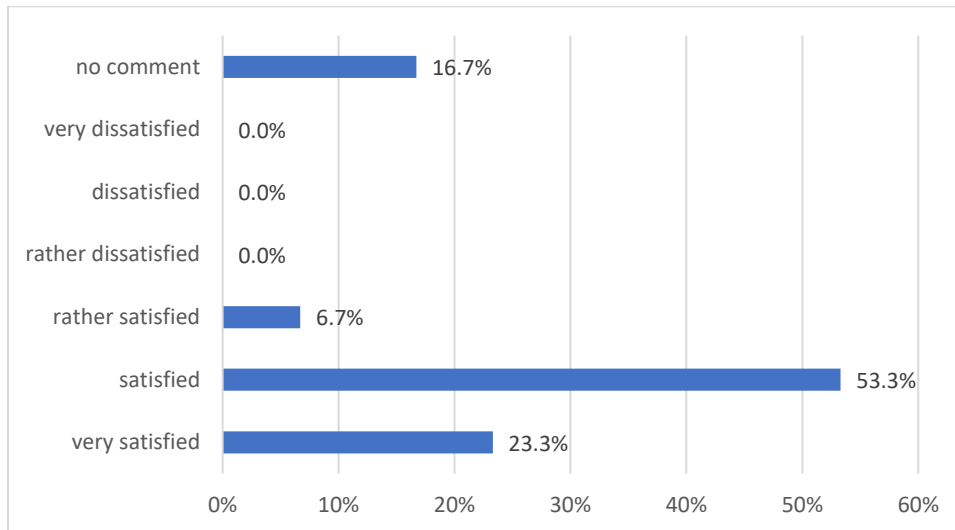
The main reason for not encashing points seemed to be a lack of points altogether (64.3% of the not-user of points) but still 28.8% simply forgot about their points. However, Figure 22 shows that nobody was not interested in encashing their collected points.

How satisfied are you with the customer loyalty programme?

The following questions referring to satisfaction with the loyalty programme could only be answered by the participants that possessed a customer card.

- Regarding registration

Figure 23 Satisfaction regarding registration process

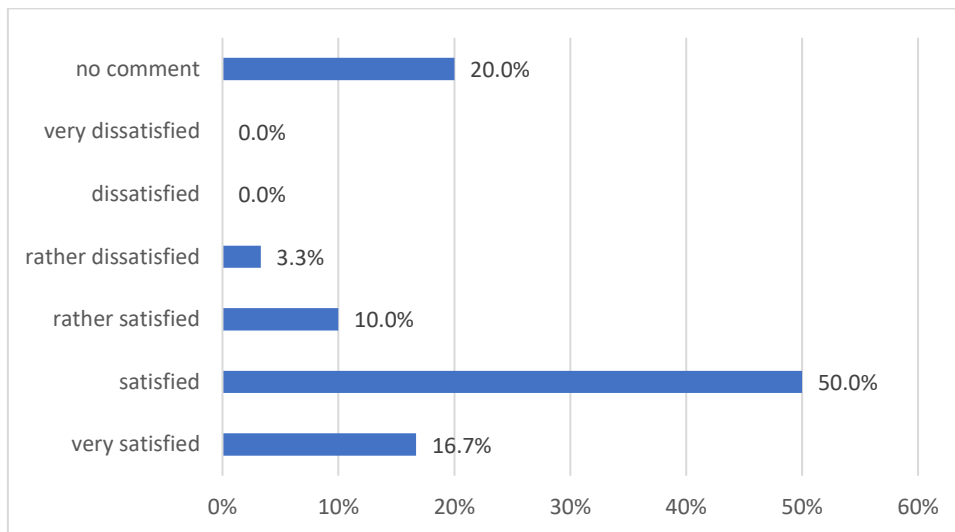


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

Generally seen, the surveyed people were quite satisfied with the customer loyalty programme registration (Figure 23) since nobody reported being rather dissatisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. More than half of the participants (53.3%) were satisfied and 23.3% were even very satisfied with the registration process of the customer loyalty programme.

- Range of offers

Figure 24 Satisfaction regarding the range of offers

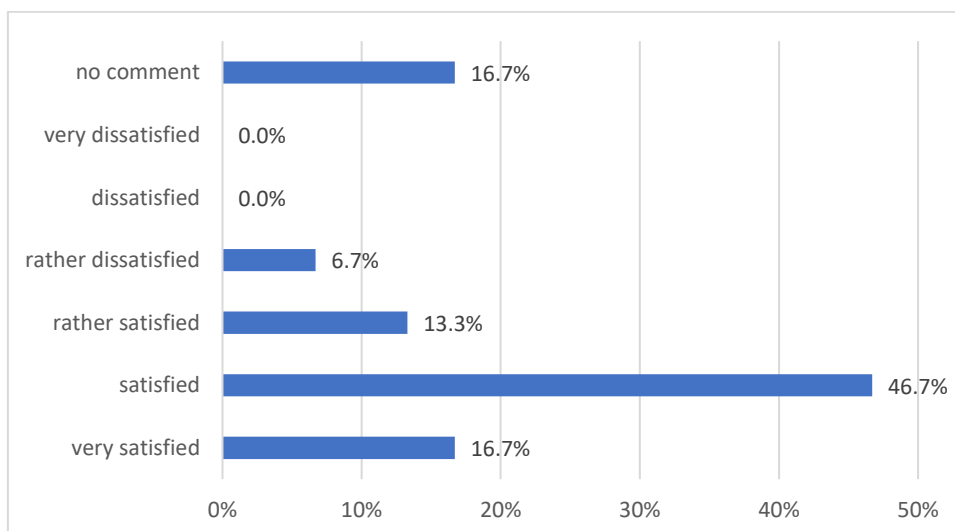


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

Further, the range of offers in the customer loyalty programme was satisfying (50% of the participants) and 16.7% were even very satisfied with it. 20% would not make a statement on this concern. However, 3.3% were rather dissatisfied with the range of offers but nobody reported being dissatisfied or even very dissatisfied (Figure 24).

- Comprehensibility of the customer loyalty programme

Figure 25 satisfaction regarding comprehensibility of homepage and hotel



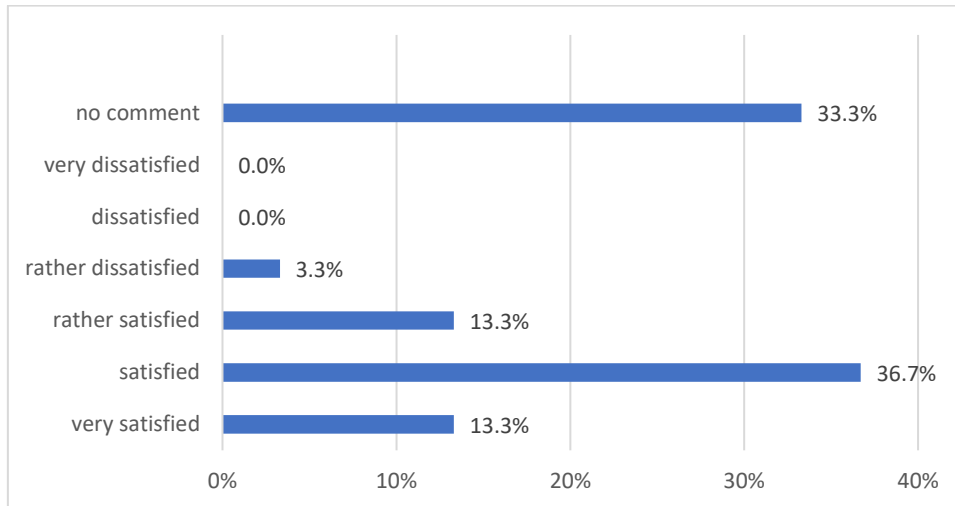
Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

In Figure 25, 46.7% were satisfied with the comprehensibility of the loyalty programme and 16.7% were even very satisfied with it. Anyhow, 6.7% were “rather dissatisfied” with the

comprehensibility of the programme and 16.7% did not make any statement regarding this question.

- Simplicity of cashing in points

Figure 26 Satisfaction regarding simplicity of encashing points

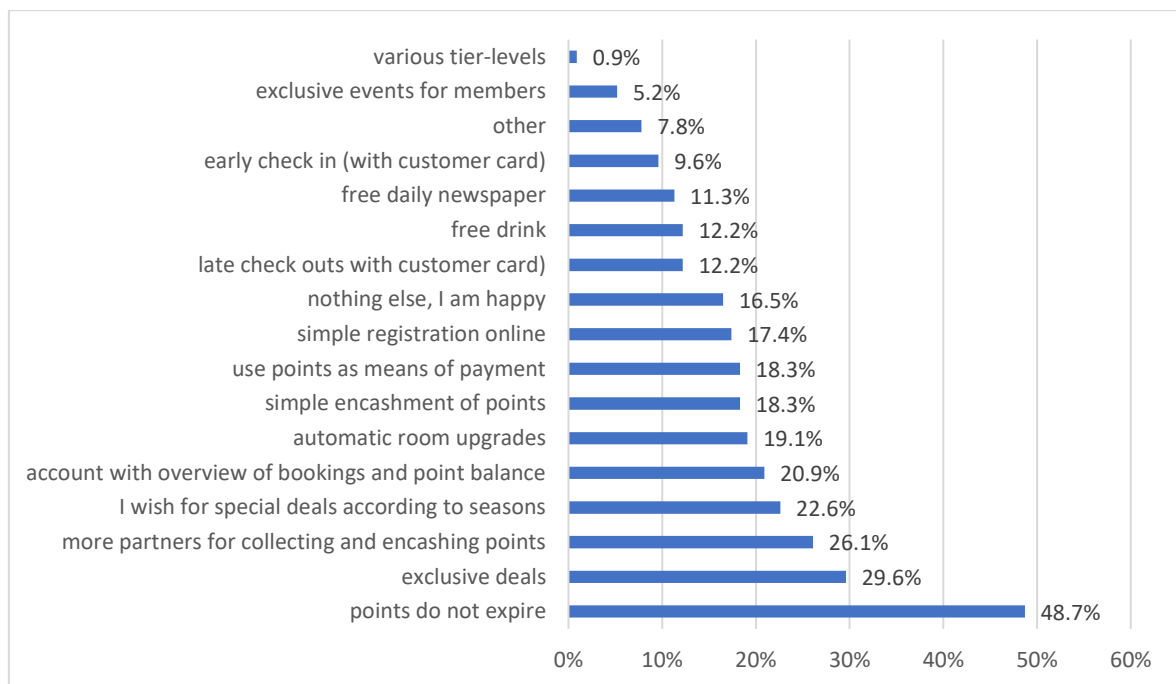


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

36.7% stated their satisfaction with the process of cashing in the points, and 13.3% were very satisfied and 13.3% were rather satisfied. But a percentage of 33.3% was not willing to make a statement concerning this question (Figure 26).

What do you wish for from a new loyalty programme of Matterhorn Valley Hotels?
(multiple answers possible)

Figure 27 Wishes for the new loyalty programme

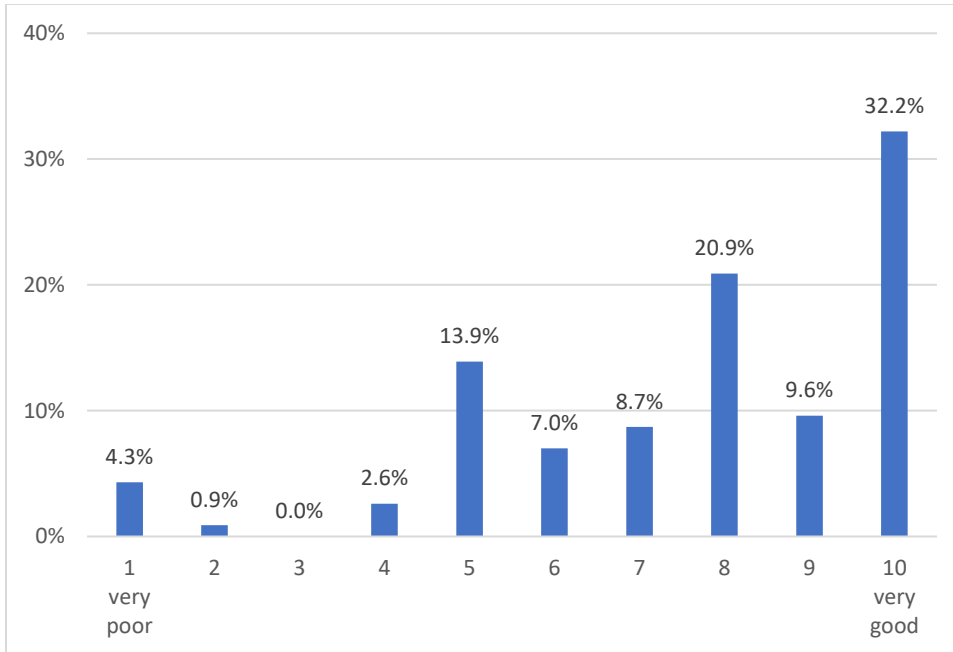


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

In Figure 27, the point mentioned the most (48.7% of the participants) was that points should not expire after one year. 29.6% of the surveyed people wished for exclusive price advantages and 26.1% would have liked to have more partners that are part of the programme. What was rather unpopular were the different tier-levels, which was only chosen by 0.9% of the participants, and exclusive events for club members (5.2% of surveyed people).

How would you rate an alliance (where customer loyalty programme is concerned) with other decentrally located Swiss hotels?

Figure 28 Rating of an alliance

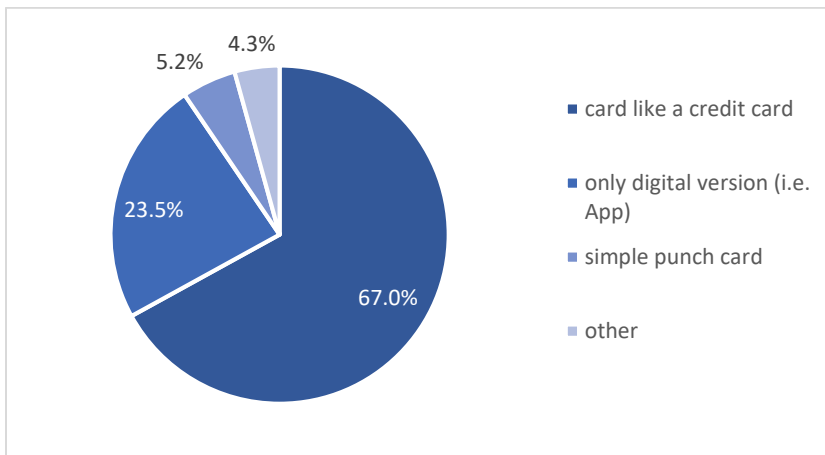


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

When the participants were asked about an alliance with other Swiss hotels, 32.2% thought it to be a very good proposition and rated it 10 out of 10, 9.6% rated it nine out of 10 and 20.9% still thought it to be eight out of 10. Only 4.3% were not convinced at all and assessed it to be a very poor idea (Figure 28).

What kind of a customer loyalty programme would you wish for (digital, like credit card, time card or anything else)?

Figure 29 Form of the new loyalty card

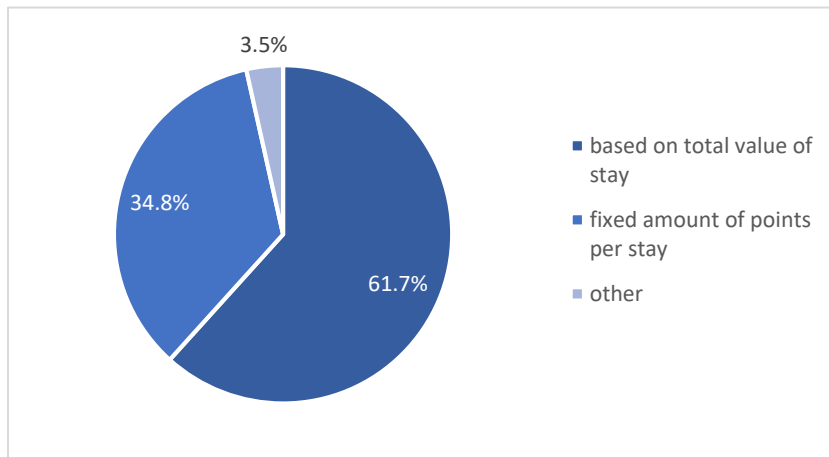


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

Regarding the question what form of customer card the participants would wish for (Figure 29), the answer was clearly a card in the form of a credit card (67%) as it is currently existing, only 23.5% would rather had a version that was solely digital like an App.

On what should the points be based?

Figure 30 Points' basis

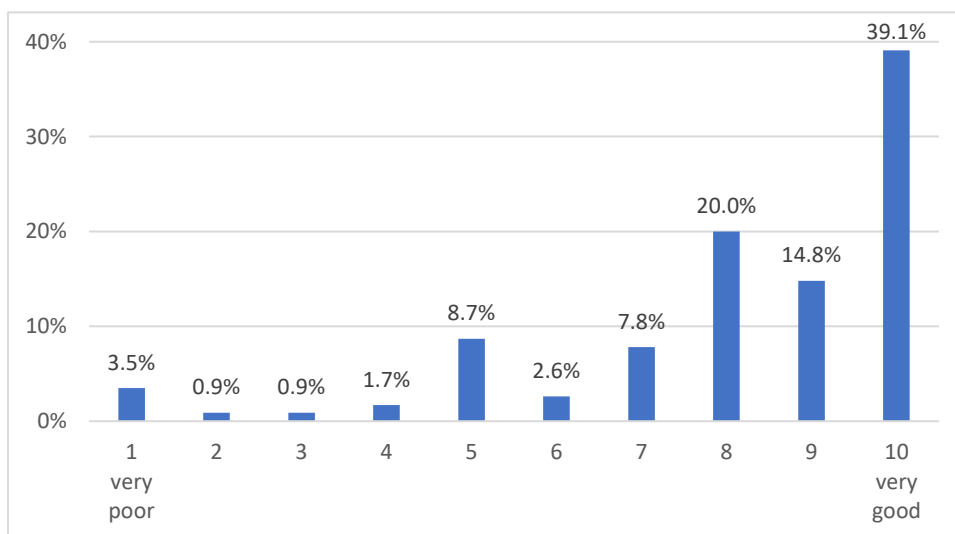


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

Figure 30 shows that 61.7% of the surveyed people thought that the amount of points credited should be based on the total amount of the stay; only 34.8% felt it should be based on a fixed amount of points per night.

How would you assess the combination of money and points as means of payment?

Figure 31 Assessment of combination of points and money

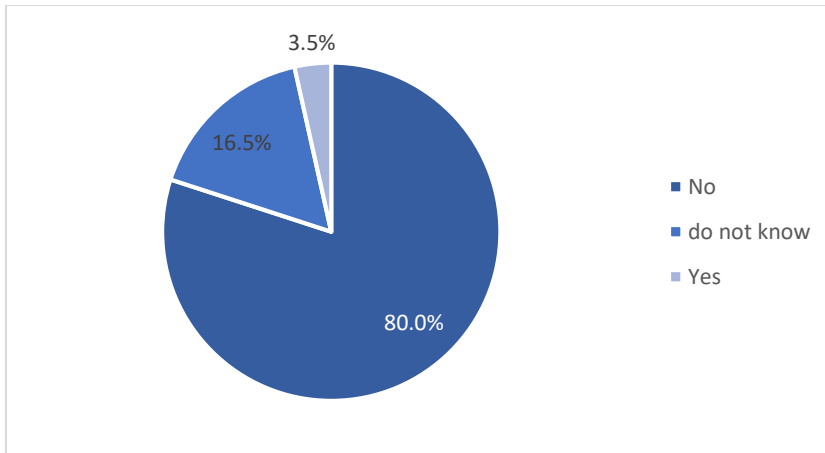


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

The surveyed people answered positively to this question. 73.9% rated this proposition at least eight (or more) out of 10. Only 3.5% assessed it to be a very bad idea (Figure 31).

Would it be acceptable if the newly launched programme had a registration fee?

Figure 32 Acceptance of a registration fee

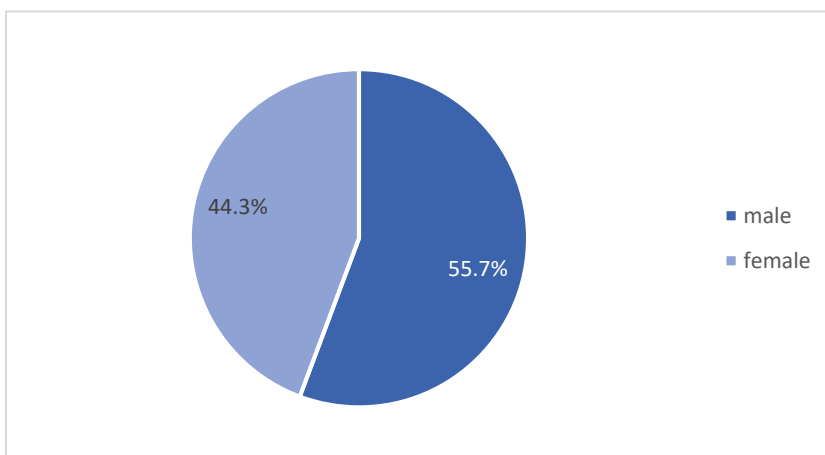


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

In Figure 32, an overwhelming 80% of the participants rated a registration fee as not acceptable, 16.5% responded as unsure if it was or not. Only 3.5% thought a registration fee was acceptable for a newly launched programme.

Are you female or male?

Figure 33 Percentage of female and male participants

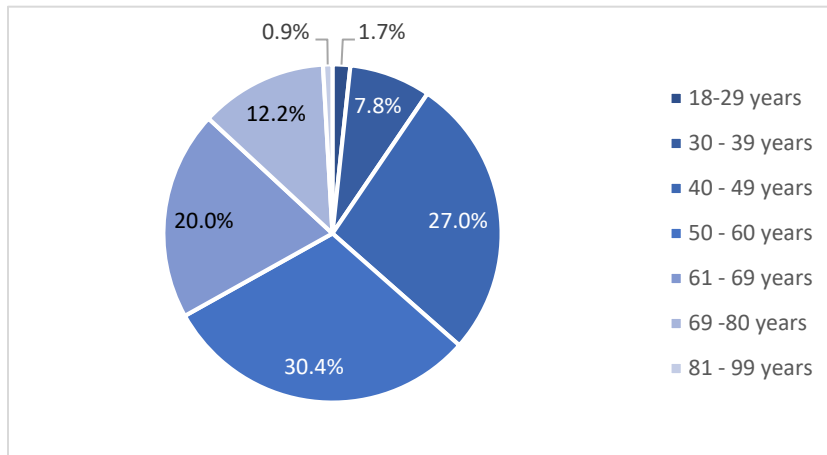


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

55.7% of the people that participated in the questionnaire were male, 44.3% were female (Figure 33).

What is your age?

Figure 34 Age of participants

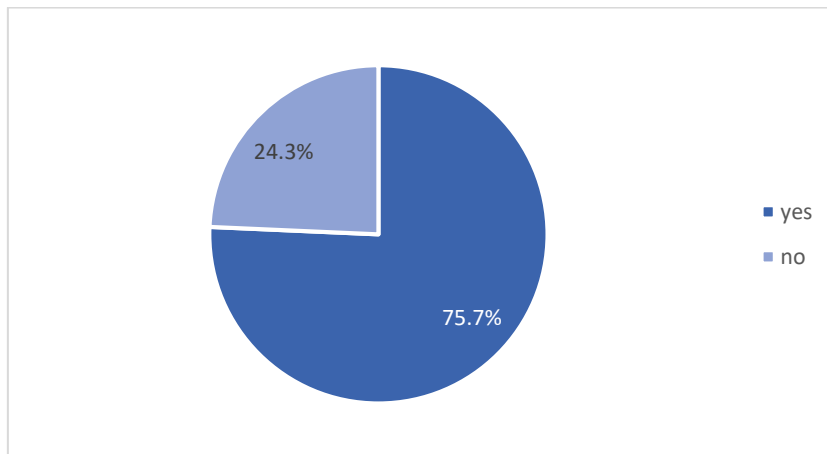


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

In Figure 34, the biggest group of participants was between 50 and 60 years old, 27% between 40 and 49 years and 20% between 61 and 69 years old. Only 1.7% were between 18 and 29 years and even less (0.9%) between 81 and 99 years.

Would you be available for another survey?

Figure 35 Availability for another survey

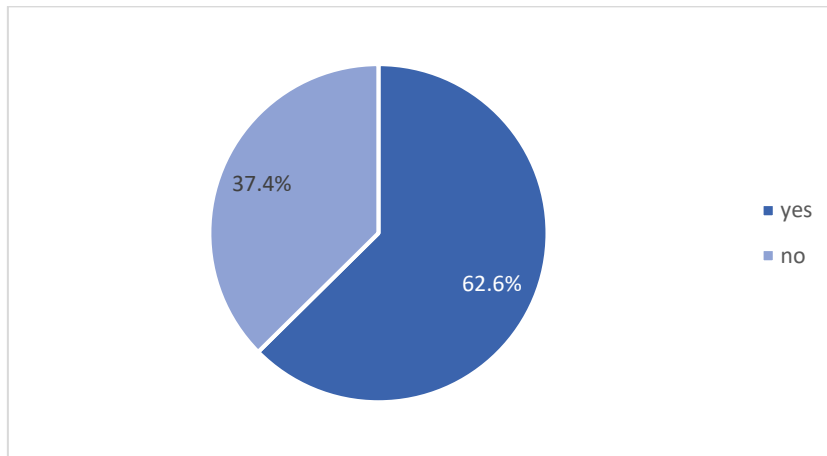


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

75.7% of the surveyed people would be available for another survey, 24.3% would not be available as Figure 35 proves.

- Would you be interested in receiving information about the new loyalty programme?

Figure 36 Interest in information of the new loyalty programme

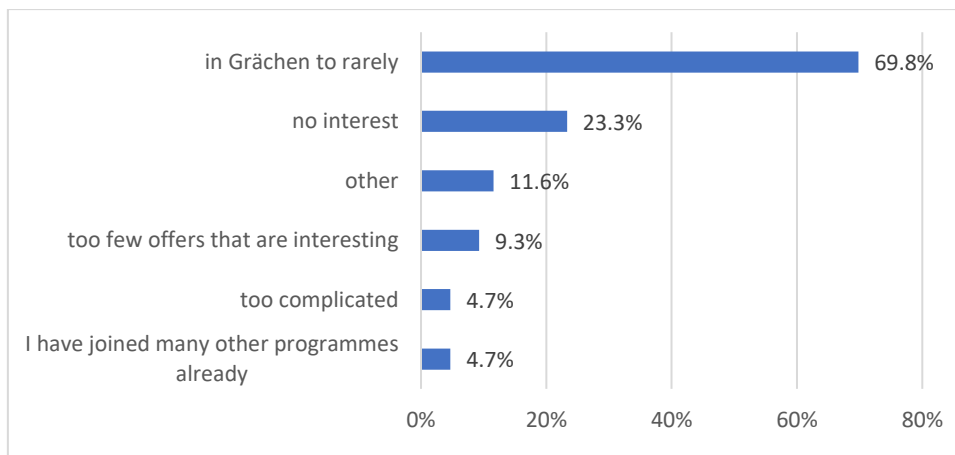


Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

Out of all the participants (Figure 36), 62.6% were interested in receiving information about the new loyalty programme. However, 37.4% answered this question with “no”. These people then were asked for the reasons, leading to the next question below.

- If no, what is the reason?
(multiple answers possible)

Figure 37 Reason for not being interested in the new loyalty programme



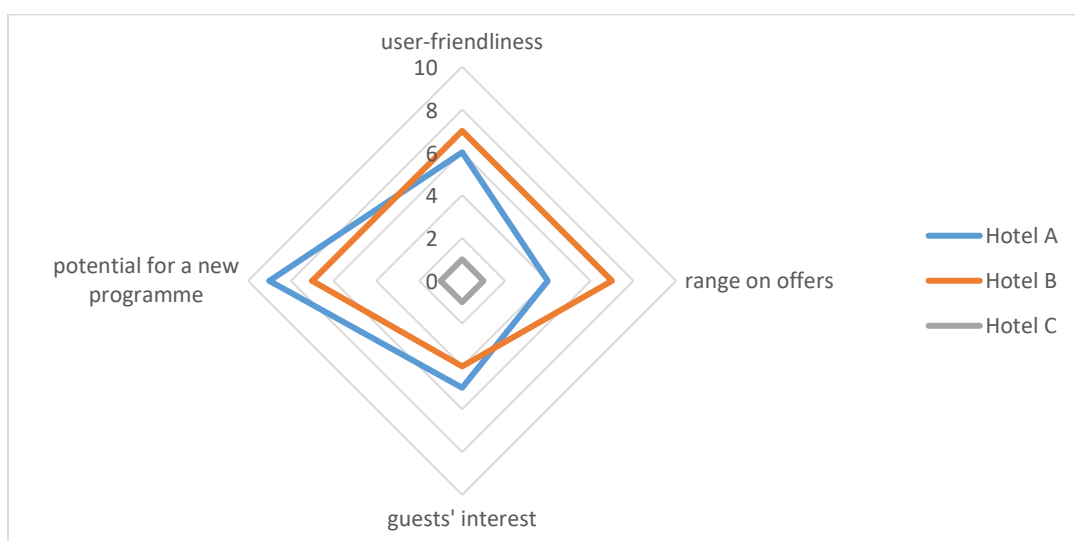
Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016a)

Figure 37 points out the main reason for the disinterest in information about a new loyalty programme: people considered they were at one of the hotels too seldom (69.8%). Another 23.3% of participants found it simply not interesting. Only 4.7% gave the reason that they have already joined many other (hotel) customer loyalty programmes.

5.3 Overview of data questionnaire 2016b (hoteliers)

The questionnaire 2016b was answered by the hoteliers from the three hotels in Grächen. The original questionnaire can be found in appendix VI. Following, the results for the questionnaire: first the diagram with all data combined, then question asked, and finally, a discussion of the answers. The diagram shows how the hoteliers from the different hotels assessed the different points. The scale starts with one (very poor) and ends with 10 (very good). The labels for the hotels (A, B and C) are based on the chronological order of filling in the questionnaire.

Figure 38 Assessment of different aspects of the loyalty programme



Source: data collected by the author (questionnaire 2016b)

What is your assessment of the user-friendliness of the customer loyalty programme?

As Figure 38 shows, two of the three hoteliers rated the user-friendliness of the customer loyalty programme between four and five; only one hotelier (C) rated it one (very poor).

What is your assessment of the range of offers of the customer loyalty programme?

This question was answered very differently by the three hoteliers (Figure 38). Whereas one assessed the range of offers is very poor (C), A considered it was below average (four out of 10) and B even thought it was above average and rated it seven out of 10. On average, the range of offers was rated four out of 10, however there is a wide span of given answers.

What is your assessment of the guests' interest in the programme?

All three hoteliers shared the view that the guests' interest was rather low, which the mean of 3.333 confirmed. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that two hoteliers (A and B) assessed the guests' interest between four and five and only one hotelier (C) rated the interest shown as very little (Figure 38).

What is your assessment of the potential for a new programme?

The question (Figure 38) concerning the potential of a new programme was rated very differently. On one hand, there was hotelier C, who assessed the potential of a new customer loyalty programme very low (one out of 10). On the other hand, hoteliers A and B shared the view of a rather high potential for a new programme to succeed. Whereas the mean was 5.7, the range of answers given was significantly broad. Hoteliers A rated it nine and hotelier B, rated the potential a seven out of 10.

Yet, it becomes obvious that in three of the four questions above, there had always been a very low rating and two, whose opinion were similar and normally higher.

Where do you see issues for the current version (from your own experience)?

According to the first hotelier (A), the loyalty programme was not attractive enough and might also be too complicated to fill the guests with enthusiasm. This view is partly shared with his colleague (hotelier C), who agreed with the point of a low attractiveness of the loyalty programme. Hotelier B, however, agreed in terms of the rather complicated system of the current loyalty programme.

In your opinion, what could be improved?

Hotelier A mentioned a simpler system, to find partners where points can be redeemed. According to his opinion, these partners should not be in Grächen itself. Hotelier C suggested monthly offers that are sent to the guests comparable to the system of Amavita pharmacies, Coop or Cumulus. Hotelier B did not suggest anything since he was "not inventing the new customer loyalty programme."

What are you expecting from a good loyalty programme?

Hotelier A argued for an up-to-date programme that was not out-of-date after a couple of years. Hotelier B was not expecting much from a good loyalty programme anyway and hotelier C expected attractive offers or discounts which could be encashed during a certain period of time.

What ought to be changed about the current version?

Hotelier A suggested the implementation of an App or other technical support since guest do forget their guest card but not their mobile phone. Hotelier B argued that the most important point was that guests really need to have the desire to join the loyalty programme. Hotelier C thought that the loyalty programme needed to offer things like attractive offers, points and discount which should be beneficial to the client.

Do you think a customer loyalty programme is necessary?

All three hoteliers thought that a customer loyalty programme was necessary for Matterhorn Valley Hotels, even though it is a tiny Swiss chain.

Why do you think so?

Hotelier A argued that the stays were getting shorter and shorter and a good customer loyalty programme might be the little difference from other hotels. It might not only be a reason to book a hotel but also extend the stay. Hotelier B mentioned that a customer loyalty programme is expected by the guests and hotelier thee suggested that it retained the guests if it was an attractive programme.

5.4 Blueprints

The blueprints in this chapter are based on how MVH offers the current loyalty programme. Through drawing blueprints, issues but also positive aspects become visible and easier to understand. There are three scenarios and each consists of two blueprints – one “original” and one “possible improvement”. The order is deliberately structured according to the point in time, when the loyalty programme becomes visible – from “not visible at all” to “visible right from the beginning”. The blueprints in this chapter 5.4 were later used as pattern for the staging in chapter 5.5.

5.4.1 Loyalty programme not visible for customers — original

This first scenario was based on the situation, after hoteliers had stopped to actively promote the customer loyalty programme. The reason were frustration and later, because a new programme was announced.

Figure 39 Blueprint "not visible"

		Customer loyalty programme not seen					
		Pre-transaction		Transaction			Post-transaction
Client	Books a room		Guest arrives at hotel		Guest enjoys holidays	Guest checks out	Guest might go online to check out offers
Reception		Processing the booking	Welcomes guests	Makes check in		Checks guest out	
Website	Room is booked over website						
Customer loyalty programme	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Line of visibility							
Hotel software		Booking goes into system		Processing check in		Processing check out	

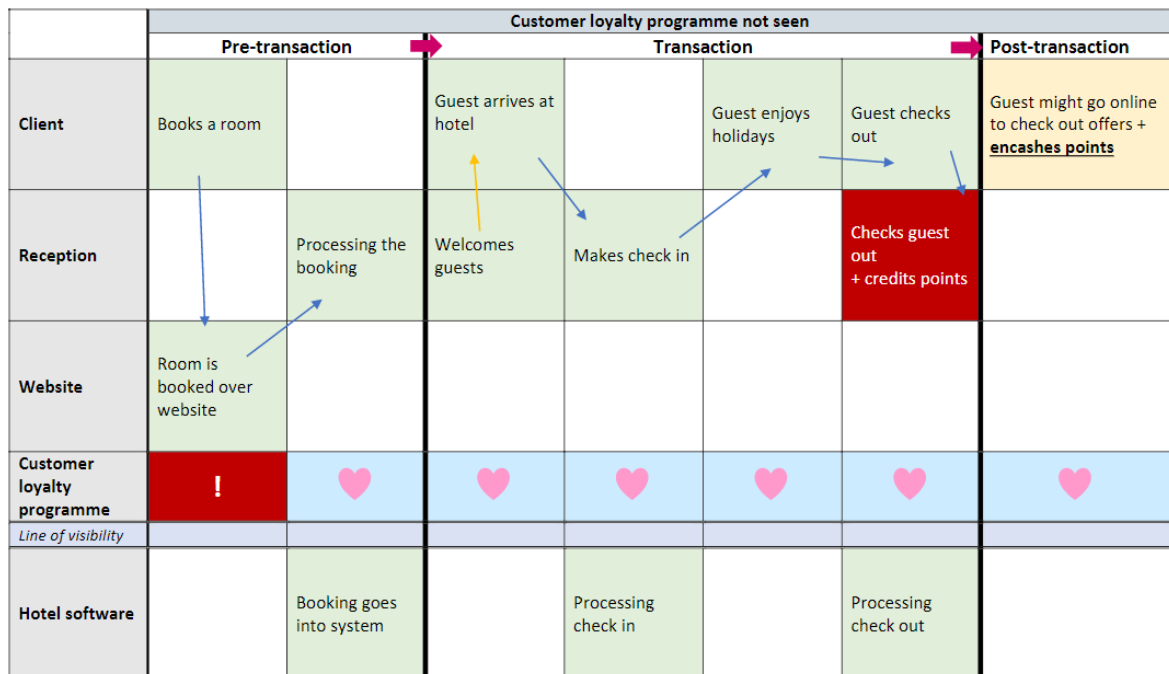
Source: author's data

This blueprint in Figure 39 shows the service when the customer loyalty programme was not made known to the customer, hence the question mark and dark colour. Further, the programme was not offered to the customer when checking in at reception. Since the customer is oblivious to the existence of the programme, he cannot collect bonus points at the end and will not receive any information about it either. What he might do is go back home, check out other available dates to go back to Grächen. This scenario is actually the current situation of MVH. Due to its former issues with printing and registering, the hoteliers stopped actively promoting the loyalty programme.

5.4.2 Loyalty programme not visible for customers — possible improvement

Based on the same scenario (Figure 39), an imaginable improvement was laboured and presented below in Figure 40.

Figure 40 Blueprint "not visible" — improved



Source: author's data

A possible improvement could be that the hotel receptionist/ website asks the customer if they are a member when they book. So, before the booking is complete, the clients should be asked if they were a member of the customer loyalty programme and given the possibility to register for it (symbolised by the exclamation mark). This way, the points could be credited at the end of the stay (red box) and the guests might go online and encash the points at some point (yellow box).

5.4.3 Loyalty programme is offered by receptionist — original

The second scenario was chosen because that is how it was done before scenario one (chapter 5.4.1) took over and is based on Andenmatten’s description how the programme was offered to the client at the reception (appendix III).

Figure 41 Blueprint "offered by receptionist"

	Reception offering customer loyalty programme							
	Pre-transaction		Transaction				Post-transaction	
Client	Books a room (online or phone call)		Client arrives at hotel		Checks out			
Reception		Book the room		Checks in guests	Guest is checked out + like to join loyalty programme?	Encashes points		
Website	Room is booked						Guest goes online to check out points & offers	Might encash points
Customer loyalty programme	?	?	?	?	Join?	Card for encashing points is used + Points credited	Points are shown	
Line of visibility								
Hotel software				Processing check in	Processing check out + Customer card is processed	Points are encashed + new ones credited	Points and offers are shown	


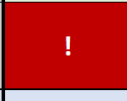




Source: author’s data

This blueprint in Figure 41 describes the service chain when the guest was not aware of the loyalty programme when booking the room (online or via phone call directly to the reception) but the reception offered the card at check out. This way, the customer might end up looking up the offers of the loyalty programme and maybe encashes his points at some point. One problem, however, might be that the guest would have tried to earn more points if he had known about the programme earlier, which would have translated into more revenue for the hotels.

5.4.4 Loyalty programme is offered by receptionist — possible improvement

Based on scenario two (Figure 41), here the imaginable improvement.

Figure 42 Blueprint "offered by receptionist" — improved

	Reception offering customer loyalty programme							
	Pre-transaction		Transaction				Post-transaction	
Client	Books a room (online or phone call)		Client arrives at hotel		Checks out			
Reception		Book the room		Checks in guests	Guest is checked out	Asks about customer loyalty card + encashes points		
Website	Room is booked						Guest goes online to check out points & offers	Might encash points 
Customer loyalty programme						Card for encashing points is used + Points credited	Points are shown	
Line of visibility								
Hotel software	Customer card is created and sent to customer			Processing check in	Processing check out	Points are encashed + new ones credited	Points and offers are shown	

Source: author's data

An improvement would be that — as seen above in Figure 42 — immediately before the booking is completed, the question about the customer loyalty programme would appear (symbolised by the exclamation mark and the red box). Of course, the card needs to be created and sent to the customer before the stay. Afterwards, the customer likes the programme which is symbolised with the little hearts. After the stay the customer might go online and encash the points collected. Here is yet another possibility to shine (symbolised with little star) — if the customer likes the offers, he is more likely to encash the points, which then creates more turnover because usually, customers do not usually only come to Grächen for one single night (appendix III).

5.4.5 Loyalty programme is seen online by the customer — original

Third and last scenario is where the client finds information about the programme oneself. For this, the guests need to find the information on MVH’s website because it is not available on the hotels’ website.

Figure 43 Blueprint "seen online"

		Guest sees customer loyalty programme online							
		Pre-transaction			Transaction			Post-transaction	
Client	Looking for a room	Sees customer loyalty programme	Book a room online		Arrives + checking in	Goes to reception for checking out		Guest goes online to check out points & offers	
Reception				Processing booking	Checks in guests	Checks out guest	Asks about customer loyalty card + encashes points		
Website			Room is booked on website						Might encash points
Customer loyalty programme	?	Joins programme					Card for encashing points is used + Points credited	Points are shown	
Line of visibility									
Hotel software		Processing registration			Processing check in	Processing check out	Points are encashed + new ones credited	Points and offers are shown	


Source: author’s data

Compared to the blueprint above (Figure 43), this one is more complex because the customer sees the loyalty programme online before he books. Therefore, he then can collect points during the whole stay. In case the receptionist did not ask about the loyalty card, the guest could have mentioned it himself – because he learnt about it. Consequently, he might go online and check out what offers there are for encashing the points and might even make use of it those.

5.4.6 Loyalty programme is seen online by the customer — possible improvement

Even though there is not much to improve on the last blueprint, but for the sake of completeness, the last proposed improvements.

Figure 44 Blueprint "seen online" — improved

		Guest sees customer loyalty programme online							
		Pre-transaction			Transaction			Post-transaction	
Client		Looking for a room	Sees customer loyalty programme	Book a room online	Arrives + checking in	Goes to reception for checking out		Guest goes online to check out points & offers	
Reception				Processing booking	Checks in guests	Checks out guest	Asks about customer loyalty card + encashes points		
Website			Room is booked on website						Might encash points 
Customer loyalty programme	?	Joins programme					Card for encashing points is used + Points credited	Points are shown	
Line of visibility									
Hotel software		Processing registration			Processing check in	Processing check out	Points are encashed + new ones credited	Points and offers are shown	

Source: author's data

The blueprint in Figure 43 is already well-developed, provided that the customer has learnt about the loyalty programme. For this, he currently needs to go to Matterhorn Valley Hotels' website since there is no direct link from all three hotel websites. Is this the case, the customer might go online and encash points, which leads to new turnover. The little star in the new blueprint (Figure 44) indicates that the website needs to be linked and that the customer loyalty programme needs to offer attractive deals. Only then, there is a chance to excel and make some profit.

5.5 Staging

After having discussed various scenarios in the previous chapter, they were used for the staging exercise (slightly adapted in favour of staging it). Each scenario was staged twice – once with each class (morning and afternoon). After having staged scenario no. one and two, the class was asked what they thought about scenario two, which introduced the customer loyalty programme at the time of checking out. Further, in the morning, there was some time left after scenario three and that is why the class was asked for any other suggestions for when and how to introduce the loyalty programme to the customers. In the afternoon class, students already started to make suggestions by themselves already after the second scenario. The original blueprints of this staging are to be found in appendix VII.

5.5.1 Scenario no. one — *Loyalty programme is not offered at all*

This scenario is based on the current situation where hoteliers do not actively promote the loyalty programme anymore due to all the issues mentioned previously in the previous chapters. The guests makes a phone call to book a room and nobody informs them about the loyalty programme during the whole stay, the customers are oblivious to the programme. Therefore they cannot join the loyalty programme, provided that they do not ask if there is one of offer. Knowing about the issues MVH-hoteliers had with the current programme, it is quite understandable that they do not actively promote it anymore. But once the new loyalty programme is launched, it is necessary that the loyalty programme is promoted through various channels.

5.5.2 Scenario no. two — *Loyalty programme is offered by receptionist*

This scenario is based on the way, the loyalty programme was promoted in the past. In both morning and afternoon classes the guests did have enough time to listen to the explanations about the loyalty programme, however that might have been different if they had to catch a flight or train. Also, the guests did not know about the loyalty programme until the end of their whole stay. If they had known (and had been interested in the loyalty programme) guests might have tried to earn more points which would have been good for the hotels' revenue. This was actually also mentioned in the discussion that followed the staging of scenario no. two (afternoon). After having staged the two scenarios, the following question was discussed: *What do you think about the version where guests were introduced to the programme when checking out?*

Discussion with students – morning class

The students thought that the personal information about the programme was better because it was more trustworthy, guests can ask questions and have direct contact. However, the timing of the introduction to the loyalty programme was questioned. It was suggested that the information at check in was a better idea because guest usually have more time. Another idea was for information to be placed in the hotel rooms or an e-mail sent to the guests. If the clients would like to join, they even get their points credited from their last stay. (Morning class, students at HES-SO Valais-Wallis, personal communication, 3 November 2016)

Discussion with students – afternoon class

This class also thought that the introduction to the loyalty programme should take place earlier at check in, not at check out, since it could also motivate guests to collect points. Otherwise it might be difficult to accumulate enough points for encashing someday. In addition, if a guest would like to join the programme (when booking), the card could be prepared and handed out at check in. With this option, there could even be a little discount available for the current booking if they join. When booked online, it was suggested that the loyalty programme could be chosen with a simple tick in the form right before the booking is complete. (Afternoon class, students at HES-SO Valais-Wallis, personal communication, 3 November 2016)

5.5.3 Scenario no. three — possible solution

The morning class played the scenario according to the blueprint scenario no. three (appendix VII). But the afternoon class decided to adapt their third scenario according to a suggestion of one of the students, where the loyalty card was not sent to the guest but handed out at check in. This suggestion was made based on the thought that it was easier and less expensive. Further, there were discussions about whether a card is still necessary or outdated. It was argued on the one hand that the card might be forgotten or lost, however on the other hand it might serve as a reminder of that hotel chain. Concerning the timing, it could be noted that there was less risky to become a hassle because the information exchange took place at check in. The advantage of this version is that the guest knows about the loyalty programme for the whole stay and might even enjoy the “hunt” for points.

Since there was some time left (morning class), the students were asked if they had any other ideas to improve the loyalty programme: They did not like the idea of pop-ups because it was considered disturbing. Rewarding guests for recommending the loyalty programme (or just the hotel) to others was suggested, along with more possibilities for earning points, for example, when eating at the hotel restaurant. Further ideas were offers according to the season as well as suggesting the programme to regular guests and rewarding them for their loyalty in the past by crediting points and gaining their loyalty for the future. (Morning class, PC, 3 November 2016)

6 Interpretation of results

Following last chapter's presentation and discussion, is the interpretation of the findings. At the end, these interpretations will be used for answering the research question. For convenience, the same development as in chapter five is applied.

6.1 Immersions

Below, the immersions are interpreted, including all points presented from above in chapter five.

6.1.1 Analysis of the current customer loyalty programme

Advantages of the programme: The programme is rather simple to understand, despite the issues found. What especially the students (staging, chapter 6.4) liked is the personal introduction of the loyalty programme when guests stay at one of the hotels. Nevertheless, the timing ought to be re-considered. Tier-levels are available and give the guests a motivation to visit more often, however it might be worth thinking about a three-tier-level programme instead (compare below in "points to improve"). Also, a member area is available which is supposed to give the members an overview of the balance of points.

Points to improve: One issue that became apparent was that on all three websites of the hotels, there was no link to the customer loyalty programme. Only the parent website of Matterhorn Valley Hotels offers a link to it, but a customer cannot know about that when from visiting the hotel's website. And if customers do not know that there is a customer loyalty programme, they can neither learn about it nor join. Furthermore, the process of registration at the reception desk seems to have been a struggle and consequently might be a reason for lingering frustration. Obviously, promoting a loyalty programme should not mean too much additional work, since the daily business needs to be handled as well. The printer might have been one reason for this frustration but also the forgotten registrations of several cards are proof enough that the current system does not work well. As discussed previously in chapter 5.1.1, there are no criteria as to who can join and who cannot. This might be good for statistics in the first place to see how many members a hotel chain has, however, as mentioned earlier, passive members do not have the potential to increase customer loyalty or sales and might even be harmful and a financial burden to the chain in the long term. Also, it is up to the receptionists to offer the customer loyalty programme

to the clients when they are at the hotel but there are not many criteria as to how these guests are selected (except the numbers of nights). This seems too random and is not very organised. Even though the same could be said about the registration over the website, it should be mentioned that this is a standard procedure on hotel chain websites. One of the big differences might be that very often, each website of a specific hotel that belongs to a hotel chain offers the link to the corresponding customer loyalty programme. Once, people became members, they only can encash their points for offers from the hotels, or the restaurants or other services that go with the hotel. Also, it was argued (compare literature review) that a three-tier level programme is better than a two-tier programme. Another issue is that it is not entirely clear how the different tier-levels can be reached with the current version of loyalty programme.

The existing member area is quite helpful but only if members have access to a computer since it is not mobile responsive. Therefore, logging into this member area is not as convenient as it could be if it was mobile responsive designed. In the interview, Andenmatten suggested the introduction of an App. However, it should be considered that developing an App is rather costly (maybe too costly for a small hotel chains such as MVH) (Gustafson, 2015). Eventually, the follow up message also seems to be a hassle for the hotels because the texts need to be changed, which is not done so easily. When guests are to be sent a follow up it should be accurate. Therefore, this needs changing as well.

Conclusion: One main issue that needs to be changed is the complicated and time-consuming process for the receptionist when somebody would like to join the programme. The issue of costs might not be addressed so easily because, as mentioned above, loyalty programmes need management and are an investment in order to motivate people to spend more money. This might be achieved by addressing the final issue of not being innovative enough. When a loyalty programme is considered to be attractive, people might be more willing to spend money. Nevertheless, it should be considered that guests are already quite satisfied with the programme but tend to forget about their collected points. Another problem is that guests do not usually have enough points to encash, which is not very motivating either. Finally, many guests do not visit Grächen very often, many, less than once a year which of course puts the low score of points into perspective. With the aim of reminding guests about Matterhorn Valley Hotels, the issue of forgetting about the points

could be addressed. Although, irregular guests — a frequent characteristic of Matterhorn Valley Hotel guest — should not be forgotten when dealing with this issue.

6.1.2 Three other customer loyalty programmes

Cumulus Card

Advantages of the programme: The programme and its bonus system is simple to understand and to use. Earning points is easy and a broad range of possibilities are offered for encashing because the vouchers are sent to the customers on a regular basis and can either be given to the cashier or scanned by the customers themselves when using the self-checkout.

Negative points: One issue occurs when the customer forgot his Cumulus Card at home because then the points from this very purchase are lost. This could be a frustrating experience. However, it remains unclear if that makes people leave the loyalty programme.

Conclusion: After this immersion, it can be said that the Cumulus Card loyalty programme is a convenient and simple system that fulfils the customers' needs. Even though there is a slight issue when the card cannot be scanned and, as a result, the points are lost, it does not seem to bother the customers too much, maybe because people's need for groceries is not influenced by anything so profound like a loyalty programme.

Bahnhof Apotheke (Feelgood's Apotheken)

Advantages of the programme: the loyalty programme is easy to understand and offers regular benefits by sending vouchers that can be encashed. A further advantage is that points can be credited without showing the card but only knowing the customers' name and address.

Negative points: there is nothing that made a negative impression during the immersion, only the options on how to encash the points are closely limited.

Conclusion: the loyalty programme serves the needs of the pharmacies and customers. The rather limited options to encash points comes with the territory of a loyalty programme for a pharmacy and might not even be considered to be bad by customers.

IHG Rewards Club

Advantages of the programme: Certainly one of the main positive aspects is the many hotels, where points can be collected and later on, encashed. For instance, points can be used for paying for a rental car or be swapped into airplane miles. Another bonus is the online management of the points which can be done on the computer or over the IHG-App. There is also the possibility to save individual preferences for a stay at a hotel such as floor level, smoker/non-smoker, proximity to elevators, different diets and even the pet's name and species.

Negative points: when looking for the other partners of the loyalty programme, it was quite tricky to find them listed and even with all various possibilities to encash the points, the programme is rather complex and delicate to understand. The encashing into miles especially could be misunderstood because it does not mean earning points through earning miles but swapping points into miles. Moreover, the fact that downloading the App did not credit the promised points was disappointing even though a response was received and points were credited. The point is that the customer had to make IHG aware of the problem, which many customers would not do in the first place and lose points.

Conclusion: it is a huge union of hotels and other partners that offer a wide range of how to earn and encash bonus points which is tricky to comprehend. A disappointment was the issue with the App, which was later solved manually by the administration.

6.2 Questionnaire 2016a

The questionnaire showed that over half of the surveyed people visited Grächen only once a year. The 26% of participants who chose the answer "other" said that they were in Grächen approximately once every two to three years. Rather surprisingly, one person claimed to be in Grächen once a month. Only low nine per cent visited twice a year. Since Grächen is MVH's only location, a future customer loyalty programme should consider the fact that people tend to visit Grächen once – or even less – a year.

There was a relatively low percentage who knew about the customer loyalty programme of Matterhorn Valley Hotels. This is surprising because all the participants subscribed to the newsletter. It could be expected that the newsletter contained information about the customer loyalty programme. One reason might be the fact that the hotel staff were fairly

reluctant to hand out loyalty cards in the recent past because the system was not working out for them (appendix III). One aim might be to motivate those 47% to join the new customer loyalty programme without producing many inactive members because these members cost the chains a lot of money (compare literature review). To achieve this, the reluctance at the staff level must be considered.

When asking the people who knew about the customer loyalty programme if they had a loyalty card, a rather high percentage said yes. This means if people knew about the programme they were quite interested in a loyalty card and therefore mentioned the hope for exclusive deals at the hotels. Another high percentage considered themselves to visit Grächen quite often, which in reality was once or twice a year at most. Further, there was the thrill of hunting for points. So, as it seems the current loyalty programme does show what could be considered “classic” reasons why people joined a loyalty programme. However, when people were asked about their reasons for not having joined the programme, a considerable number believed they visited Grächen too rarely.

Another important point to consider for a new programme is the rather low percentage who actually encashed the collected points. Interestingly, almost half of the participants in the survey did not encash their points. Only 53.3% did use their points. The next question was only available for the 46.7% that claimed not to encash their points because apparently, it seemed to be a problem to collect enough points in order to be able to encash those in a reasonable time. Considering that many surveyed people were not very often in Grächen, this might have been a major obstacle.

However, when people were asked about their general satisfaction concerning the loyalty programme, they seemed to be satisfied and happy or even very satisfied. This shows that the current programme is not as bad as could have been expected when so many people did not encash their points. So, there might be aspects of the programme that actually satisfied guests and should not necessarily be changed. The interesting question is what exactly made the members happy and what did not. When examining the satisfaction regarding range of offers, the percentage of happy members was still quite high. However, there were a few who were rather dissatisfied. In addition, 20% did not wish to elaborate. Therefore, there were over 20% of members who were either not too happy or did not share their opinion which might be taken as a sign to rethink the range of offers. Nevertheless, the change should not be too big

since there were still many satisfied guests who should not be perturbed in the process. Much the same applies for the comprehensibility of the customer loyalty programme with one difference: there were more dissatisfied members. Moreover, a remarkably high number did not want to give any details about their assessment of simplicity of encashing points. One reason for this reluctance might be the fear of being regarded incapable — or worse — not smart enough. On the other hand, there was still a perfectly high number of satisfied members here as well.

Almost half of the members wished for points that do not expire after one year. This was by far the most common answer. The second most common answer was the wish for exclusive deals, which still appeared to be one of the main motivation to join a customer loyalty programme.

What was positively received was the idea of an alliance with other decentrally located Swiss Hotels. However, this seemed not to be the case for the hoteliers (interview Andenmatten) even though this is a new trend, especially in the US market. The question is if this might be of interest for the European or even Swiss market. The answers given could show the potential for this new trend which therefore might be worth a try.

Also, customers seemed to prefer a loyalty card in the form of an actual card, comparable to a credit card. Interestingly, hotelier Andenmatten would appreciate new versions that are coming in form of an App or other media in order to make life simpler for the receptionists. Apparently, there were and still are many guests who leave their card at home which complicates the process of crediting points. A solution for this issue might be an App that completes the card, rather than replacing it. However as mentioned earlier, Apps are quite expensive to create. Therefore it might not be the best idea to pursue.

Members also preferred points are based on the actual amount of money spent at the hotel and not a fixed amount of points per night. The former appears to be standard at many hotel chains as became apparent in the literature review, maybe because it is fairer than a flat-rate system, with points corresponding to how much guests spend at the hotel.

Not surprising was the result of the next question. 80% of the surveyed did not approve of a registration fee. No registration fee is very common in customer loyalty programmes, which

is probably a reason why people did not approve either. Since the disapproval was so high, a registration fee should definitely to be avoided.

The majority (over 55%) of the participants were male. The age of the participants had its peak at the age of 50 – 60 years. This could have influenced the perception of the card as well as the expectations of a customer loyalty programme but also who actually answered the questionnaire. Knowing that the majority of respondents were over 40 years should be considered and their expectations should be met. Nevertheless, there ought to be offers available for younger guests as well because they will ensure the future of the hotels.

Over 75% of the surveyed people were ready to answer another survey which is most interesting for Matterhorn Valley Hotels when creating other surveys. So, it seemed that the subscribers of the newsletter were quite happy to fill in other questionnaires.

Moreover, from all participants, over 60% were interested in the new loyalty programme. Considering the fact that only a little over 50% knew about the current customer loyalty programme, and 74% out of those were a member of it, this was not too bad for a result. Further, these were only the subscribers of the newsletter and it would be interesting to know how the non-receiver feel. The most common reason for not being interested in receiving information about the new loyalty programme was the fact that people thought they were in Grächen too rarely. If this is to be conquered, an alliance with other hotels could be a possible answer, as was already mentioned.

6.3 Questionnaire 2016b

As noted previously, in three out of four quantitative questions, there were two groups: one consisting of only one hotelier and one consisting of two hoteliers. It became apparent that these two groups did not mix, so group one consisted always of the same hotelier who assessed the existing loyalty programme as well as the potential of a new customer loyalty programme very low. Therefore, it might not be too surprising that this hotelier claimed a low guest interest in the existing loyalty programme because selling a product can only work if the service provider believes in it him/herself. However, the other group tended to rate the customer loyalty programme higher and did not show much variation the assessments.

The hoteliers remarked that guests' interest in the customer loyalty programme was not as high as it could be – exactly like Graefen realised before this study started. The answers given,

offered a first proof of this problem and was interesting to compare with the answers from questionnaire 2016a.

Another very diverse result can be seen in the question concerning the potential for a new programme. Again, there were the two groups but more importantly, the assessments differed extremely (between one and nine). One reason for this quite conflicting positions might be the very own experiences the hoteliers might have had.

Concerning the quantitative questions, a few keywords were mentioned several times such as “not attractive enough” and “complicated version of a loyalty programme”. “Attractive offers” were then mentioned to be key to a successful programme, but also the “ability to retain customers”.

Rather surprising were the responses concerning the necessity of a loyalty programme for Matterhorn Valley Hotels because, although all quantitative questions were rated with 1 out of 10 by one hotelier, all three hoteliers then argued that there was a need for a customer loyalty programme at Matterhorn Valley Hotels. A possible explanation might be the fact that many hotel chains offer a customer loyalty programme and guests were even expecting hotels to have one nowadays.

6.4 Staging

The staging showed mainly the importance of the timing of informing guests as well as the method of informing about the programme. Whereas not informing the guests at all is no option, it ought not to be at check out either. The reason is that guests might be in a hurry to catch a train and might not have time to listen to an explanation of a loyalty programme. One option could be that the information is shared at the beginning — during check in, or even earlier — right before the booking is completed. This option would avoid any pop-ups but still inform the client from the start. Moreover, there were discussions if a card is necessary or not – however with no final result. Having seen that MVH-guests sometimes forgot their card at home, a card should not be the key to credit the points but rather the owner’s name on it. Should a customer forget his card at home, there still would be a possibility to credit the points by asking for the guest’s name, entering it in the system and having the information there without even necessitating the card itself. This might require a new system, nevertheless it may avoid a lot of troubles and extra work.

6.5 Answers to research questions

After having conducted all the research above, both research questions are answered.

Does a “classic” customer loyalty card make sense for a little hotel chain such as Matterhorn Valley hotels – whose three hotels are based in the same village?

The research for small hotel chains for comparing their loyalty programmes turned out to be rather tricky. Even chains with 10 up to 20 hotels very often did not have a loyalty programme. Therefore, it seems that a loyalty programme is not necessary for such a small hotel chain. On the other hand, the interview with Olivier Andenmatten showed that the hoteliers do want one and the customers also (63% of the surveyed people) seemed to be interested in receiving information about a new loyalty programme. Furthermore, a lot of studies showed the value of a loyalty programme, even if negative aspects can be quite significant. So, even though other such small hotels did not have a loyalty programme, both guests and hoteliers would like one. Therefore, if a loyalty programme should exist, it needs proper management in order to generate additional revenue and avoid loss of money, as was discussed in the literature review.

Can the existing loyalty programme be made more attractive to customers and if yes, how?

The immersion as well as the questionnaires 2016a and 2016b two showed that – even though customers seem to be quite satisfied with the current loyalty programme – there are still issues that need improvement. The interview with Olivier Andenmatten made it especially clear that the current loyalty programme is not very user-friendly (for staff). Of course this is a relevant point because how can a loyalty programme be successful if the staff do not believe in it themselves and consequently do not offer and promote it to the customer? The issues became apparent in the service design analysis and were taken into consideration when developing the recommendations for the new customer loyalty programme.

7 Production

In the last two chapters (five and six), the results from the research have been presented, discussed and interpreted. Now, this is the fourth step in service design, where an action plan is produced. The research conducted was the basis of it and will be used for the recommendations, which are introduced in chapter 7.1. Mostly, several of these recommendations are part of one step, however some stand from themselves. In chapter 7.2, the action plan is laid out. In addition, potential barriers or resistances are discussed as well as some possible solutions.

7.1 Description of recommendations

Inform hoteliers

This is the first and a crucial step of the action plan. The hoteliers need to be informed about the procedure of creating a new customer loyalty programme. Only when everybody is on board with the work that needs to be done, can the project can be successful. The hoteliers already know that a new loyalty programme is planned but now, they need to know precisely what the procedure will be.

Reconsideration of structure

It is critical to understand that Matterhorn Valley Hotels is a very small hotel chain and one of the most significant issues to consider is the fact that many guests visit Grächen less than once a year (chapter 5.2). Therefore, this needs to be taken into account when creating the new loyalty programme. In spite of the infrequent visits, guests seem to appreciate the loyalty programme and hoteliers share the opinion that Matterhorn Valley Hotels should have a programme. But when customers are rarely staying at one of the hotels it can be difficult to earn enough points to encash them later. Therefore, the following recommendations concerning structure might be considered:

- **Combination of money and points**

Since guests have struggled with collecting enough points for encashing them within a sensible period of time, a combination of money and points might be an option to encourage people to use their points. This is practised in several hotel chains as the comparison of hotel chains shows in chapter three. The advantage is that customers

do not have to wait too long for their rewards but not too short either thus encashing is still within reach.

- Sensible expiration date of points

Another way of preventing guests from abandoning the loyalty programme could be a sensible expiration date when it comes to points. An expiration could motivate guest to encash their points because otherwise the points are lost — provided that the time span is not too short (due to irregular visits in Grächen). The timespan could be between one and two years which correlates with guests' answers referring to repeated stays in chapter 5.2.

- Join an individual hotel association

As seen in chapter 3.4, individual hotel associations are a new trend, especially in America. *iPrefer* for instance is also operating in Switzerland and could be an alternative instead of having one's own loyalty programme. Nevertheless, a calculation for both options is needed to have a clear overview, which can then be used as a basis for this decision. Another idea is to found one's own individual hotel association within Switzerland with other small hotel chains or individual hotels.

- At least a three tier-level programme

The issue about the different tier-levels in loyalty programmes was discussed in chapter 1.1 and chapter 5.1 (current loyalty programme of MVH). It was said that a three-tier level loyalty programme proved to be better than a two-tier loyalty programme. A lot of hotel chains (appendix I) do have even more levels. Therefore, at least a three tier-level programme would be advisable, which needs to be clear in structure as well as in definition; that is, exactly how the different levels can be achieved by the guests.

Reconsideration of offers

Even though customers seemed pleased with the current range of offers, the “rather dissatisfied” guests should not be ignored either. Hotelier Andenmatten as well thought (appendix III) that the offers needed to be more attractive and perhaps even include cross-channel partners.

- Exclusive deals, maybe corresponding to season?

To make it more interesting to guests to come to Grächen, exclusive deals corresponding to the season might be another idea to employ (also suggested by some students). Of course, the guests would need to be informed and the deals must be attractive enough to utilise, for instance with an extra amount of points to earn at the end of the stay. As for the deals, it should include at least one night at a hotel, a dinner at one of the restaurants and an additional highlight. In winter, that might be a day at the Spa, in summer, a guided tour according to a particular topic. The aim of that suggestion is to offer guests something new and exciting, which they can experience with the loyalty programme and that motivates guests to visit to Grächen.

- Offering “better” service instead of freebies

Taking the example from luxury hotel chains and having suggested to increase the range of offers, offering service instead of freebies might be an additional thought to consider. At the same point, only offering customers free things might not be rewarding enough and does not surprise the customer anymore. This can start with little things such as a little basket with nibbles and a little drink, delivering the daily newspaper up to the room or being more flexible with check in and check out times. For the very frequent customers, a free room upgrade would certainly delight the guests – of course depending on availability.

- Increase the range of offers (e.g. with cross-channel partners)

The participants also thought it might be interesting to have more partners, where points can be collected and encashed. If guests really take advantage of this as they suggested in questionnaire 2016a (chapter 5.2), it generates revenue which then motivates guests once again to encash those points at some point.

Reconsideration of organisation

As for the organisation, there were some issues as well that need improving in order to run more smoothly. For one, this is better for the customers, but also for the hoteliers, or rather the receptionist.

- Loyalty programme in credit card format

The surveyed people obviously still liked the loyalty programme credit card, which is used for the IHG loyalty programme. However, the system needs to be easier for the hoteliers, otherwise mistakes will happen again, irritating for both guests and hoteliers (chapter 6.2).

- Find a method of crediting points when card is not on hand

This is another important issue connected with the previous point. It needs to be easier to find a way to credit points when the card is left at home (chapter 6.2).

- Regular newsletter about loyalty programme (e-mail, social media)

What is done by other hotel chains, such as IHG, could also work for MVH. As questionnaire 2016a showed, people forget about their accumulated points if they are not reminded of their balance. So, a regular e-mail or the use of social media could make the difference here, however, should be handled carefully, otherwise it becomes a nuisance.

- Link for loyalty programme on hotel websites

This point should not mean a big change but is rather a way of making things easier for the programme members. However, it might also increase the number of members since there is no link to the programme from any of the hotel websites, it is confusing for potential clients and members.

- Declaration of points' value

This also is a simple alteration. Many hotel chains do have a declaration of what the money, spent at a hotel, is worth in points. It is a way of keeping the members informed about the customer loyalty programme which might have a positive effect on the comprehension of the whole programme (chapter 5.2).

- Higher user-friendliness for hoteliers (registration, credit points, follow up)

Vital for hoteliers is the user-friendliness because if the loyalty programme is so time-consuming right from registration, it irritates guest and receptionist and ends in a repeat of the current situation. The computer system absolutely needs to be reconsidered, otherwise no receptionist is motivated to promote the loyalty programme. Another solution might be to let guests register for themselves and only

handing out information. If guests really want to join they will anyway and if they do not, inactive members can be avoided.

Definition of the new customer loyalty programme

The next step is to decide what parts of the loyalty programme are to be kept, what needs adapting and what new elements are to be added. Another crucial point that ought not to be forgotten is a financial planning. Further, MVH may be in need of a new software for the loyalty programme in order to make it more user-friendly.

Inform staff

Informing the staff is vital because, in the end, they need to deal with the programme on a daily basis. Therefore, informing the staff about the programme spreads not only the word, it gives the staff the feeling of appreciation as well as competence.

Inform guests

The second last step is to inform the guests about the new customer loyalty programme in detail. The members know that there will be a new programme but now, at the end of the whole process, they also need to know what exactly has changed, and what is new and exciting as well as reasons why people should join. Furthermore, it might even be the first motivation for some guests to test the programme, so the information needs to be attractive and intriguing as well.

Start new loyalty programme

The final step is to launch the new programme. It might be a good idea to test the new loyalty programme (if possible) a few weeks earlier in order to ensure that everything is running smoothly.

7.2 Plan of action

This action plan is organised in the same steps like above. For each step, there is a responsible person/group appointed who will take action, a time limit, resources available and additional resources that are needed. Finally, the communication plan then lays out how the communication is supposed to be organised.

7.2.1 Action plan table

Table 10 Action plan for MVH

Action plan steps	By whom?	By When?	Resources available	Resources needed	Way of communication
Step 1 inform hoteliers	David Graefen (Marketing)	Middle of December 2016	Bachelor Thesis with questionnaires about loyalty programmes	Short presentation Timetable for new loyalty programme	Presentation Short summary (document)
Step 2 reconsideration of structure	David Graefen + hoteliers	End of January 2017	Opinions of hoteliers/Graefen Bachelor Thesis with questionnaires about loyalty programmes	Further research about financial aspects	meetings
Step 3 reconsideration of offers	David Graefen + hoteliers	End of January 2017	compare <i>step 2</i>	Further research about financial aspects	meetings
Step 4 reconsideration of organisation	David Graefen + hoteliers	End of January 2017	compare <i>step 2</i>	Further research about financial aspects	meetings
Step 5 Definition of new loyalty programme	David Graefen + hoteliers	Middle of March 2017	compare <i>step 2</i>	Come up with financial planning New software (for loyalty programme)	Meetings Financial plan
Step 6 inform staff	hoteliers	End of March 2017	Newly developed customer loyalty programme	Small presentation about new customer loyalty programme	Presentation Small manual and explanation
Step 7 inform guests	David Graefen + hoteliers	Beginning of April 2017	Newly developed customer loyalty programme	Newsletter Social media Information at receptions	Newsletter via e-mail Social media post
Step 8 start new loyalty programme	MVH	End of April 2017	Newly developed customer loyalty programme	Internet New software	Short post on social media

Source: author's data

7.2.2 Potential barriers or resistance

The potential barriers, such as finances or software issues, are not to be ignored. A customer loyalty programme is intended to increase revenue and therefore, finances need to be considered and dealt with. In chapter 1.1.4 it was noted that the costs of a loyalty programme are usually included in the total price for the guests and this should be done here as well. Firstly, the costs must be calculated, estimated and a financial plan created. Moreover, everybody needs to be on board with the new loyalty programme, especially the hoteliers and receptionists, since it is they who are in the front-line of the service and guests will sense if hoteliers hesitate to offer the programme. It may also be time for new software or a new system for the loyalty programme because the last one did not seem to be user-friendly at all and this ought to change. Regardless of all barriers and resistances mentioned, the bottom-line is how guests perceive the value of the new customer loyalty programme. If they do not see any value in it, they are not going to use it and the programme will fail. So, to please the customer is crucial and should be remembered throughout the whole process of the action plan.

Conclusion

Nowadays, a customer loyalty programme is a common marketing tool in the tourism industry. A comparison of different hotel chain types showed that there were many differences between loyalty programmes across the various hotel chain types. Whereas the biggest hotels usually had very diverse programmes featuring credit cards, air travel and additional partners, loyalty programmes of smaller or individual hotel associations usually had less diversity. However, they might score well with their individuality and charm. In the luxury hotel sector, quality of service seemed to be more important than discounts or other bonuses. Therefore, loyalty card members enjoy an even higher service standard.

The immersion into MVH's current customer loyalty programme revealed that there were several issues to be addressed: information about the loyalty programme was only available on the MVH's website, the process of creating loyalty cards and registering them into the system is a nuisance and the tier-levels were unclear. The other three immersions into other loyalty programmes revealed the fact that the loyalty programmes in the retailing sector (Cumulus and pharmacy) is of a simpler nature than the one of the hotel. The amount of points credited was based on the value of the purchase and only differed in the event of not having the card at hand. As for the hotel's loyalty programme, the various possibilities were much more challenging to understand. Although the management of points and encashing was simplified with an App and member account, it came across that it was only about hunting for points. To understand the "rules" was not that simple, as a consequence.

Questionnaire 2016a produced the understanding that the majority of guests visited Grächen once – or even less – in a year. Also, only a low percentage knew about the loyalty programme. A high percentage of those people, however, hold a card. The three most common reasons for holding a card were: the hope for exclusive deals, frequent visits to Grächen and the thrill of hunting for points. If they did not hold a card it was usually due to rare visits in Grächen. Further, a low percentage encashed their accumulated points, stemming from a problem of not collecting enough points before they expire. However, the surveyed people were generally quite satisfied with the loyalty programme. Questionnaire 2016b showed a rather split group of hoteliers. Two of them were more positive about loyalty programmes than the third. Nevertheless, in the end all agreed that a loyalty programme was necessary for MVH.

The staging uncovered the issue regarding the way guests are informed about the loyalty programme as well as the most visible timing for this. Further ideas of how to improve the loyalty programme were gathered and discussed. The main finding was that the loyalty programme should be promoted at the beginning of a stay (online or at check in) rather than at end.

Finally, an action plan was suggested to assist MVH in developing a new loyalty programme. The steps are the following: inform hoteliers, reconsideration of structure, offers and organisation, define the new customer loyalty programme, inform staff, inform guests, and start using the new loyalty programme. Reconsideration of the loyalty programme's software is suggested since the current process has caused so much trouble in the past. Further, financial calculations are essential for the success of a new loyalty programme and ought to be done before the definition of the new programme. Limits to this study are both software and finances. Although mentioned in this study, they warrant a more detailed examination. A financial plan is definitely going to be necessary as well as to find a suitable software for administering the loyalty programme. Further, questionnaire 2016a was limited to subscribers of the MVH newsletter who and might has influenced the results. Therefore, it is suggested to make a broader survey with as many guests as possible in order gather as much data as possible. Further, it certainly would be valuable to do other surveys after having launched the programme, in order to eliminate issues, keep and improve the customer loyalty programme's standard, and thrive in future. However, it should be considered that nowadays, globalisation does not allow a standstill and requires flexibility. Therefore, a customer loyalty programme needs adaptation from time to time as well. On that note, whether MVH decide to implement parts of this study's action plan or not, the loyalty programme should always be kept up to date but most importantly, be of value to the customers.

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Appendix I : Loyalty programmes lists

Author's data with multiple sources. Loyalty programmes – part 1. Retrieved from

- <http://travel.usnews.com/rankings/travel-rewards/hotel-rewards/marriott-rewards/>
- <http://travel.usnews.com/rankings/travel-rewards/hotel-rewards/hilton-hhonors-membership/>
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- <http://de.amari.com/onyx-rewards.aspx>
- <http://www.dedemanloyalclub.com/home/about>
- <https://www.sorat-hotels.com/en/loyalty-program.html>

	3 Largest hotels			3 Small hotel chains		
	Marriott	Hilton Worldwide	Intercontinental Hotel Group	Amari Hotels & Resorts	Dedeman Hotels & Resorts Intern.	Sorat Hotels
Earn points						
credit card use						
Air travel						
book a room						
spa treatments						
dining at Hotel						
traveling partners						
dining partners						
shopping partners						
Events at hotel						
use points						
book rooms						
other hotel expenses						
room upgrade						
Air travel						
night free (after certain nights booked)						
cash & points						
concerts						
golf lessons						
sporting events						
travel packages						
cruises						
gift cards						
rental cars						
retail partners						
donations						
Membership levels						
number of levels	4	4	6	3	3	0
Perks from which level						
earn & use points	1	1	1	1	1	
early check-in	2	1	2	2	2	
late check-out	2	1	1	2	2	
member discount	1			1	2	
free room upgrades	3	3	2	2	1	
free amenities	1	1	1	3	1	
free nights	1	4				
further extras	2	1	1	1	1	
points expire?						
Yes/No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
membership free						
Yes/No			Yes		Yes	Yes
Further						
blackout dates	No	Yes	No	Yes	?	?
source	a	b	c	d	e	f

Numbers refer to the level, from which the benefits are available.

Author's data with multiple sources. Loyalty programmes – part 2. Retrieved from

- g. <http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/rewards>
- h. <http://www.oberoigroupconnections.com/>
- i. <http://www.raffles.com/raffles-ambassadors/member-benefits/>
- j. <https://www.stashrewards.com/>
- k. <http://travel.usnews.com/rankings/travel-rewards/hotel-rewards/iprefer/>
- l. <http://www.vhr.com/memberbenefits.aspx>
- m. <http://www.sunstar.ch/gaeste-service/treueprogramm/>

	3 best luxurious hotels			Best Independent hotel associations			Swiss Chains	
	The Ritz-Carlton	Oberoi Hotel & Resorts	Raffles Hotel & Resorts	Stash rewards	iPrefer	Voilà Hotel	Sunstar	
Earn points								
credit card use								
Air travel								
book a room								
spa treatments								
dining at Hotel								
traveling partners								
dining partners								
shopping partners								
Events at hotel								
use points								
book rooms								
other hotel expenses								
room upgrade								
Air travel								
night free (after certain nights booked)								
cash & points								
concerts								
golf lessons								
sporting events								
travel packages								
cruises								
gift cards								
rental cars								
retail partners								
donations								
Membership levels								
number of levels	3		0	0	2		4	
Perks from which level								
earn & use points	1				1	1	1	
early check-in					1	2		
late check-out	1				1	2	3	
member discount	1						1	
free room upgrades	2				1	2		
free amenities					1	2		
free nights					1	1		
further extras					2	1	1	
points expire?								
Yes/No	Yes			No	Yes		?	
membership free								
Yes/No	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Further								
blackout dates	?		Yes	No	?	No	?	
source	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	

Numbers refer to the level, from which the benefits are available.

Appendix II : Guideline for immersion

- How to register:
- Who can register?
- How to earn points?
- Where to earn and encash points?
- Other partners for earning points
- What if the card is left at home?

Appendix III: Transcription phone-interview with Olivier Andenmatten

Interview Herr Andenmatten

26. September 2016

Eliane Lörtscher

- Hoteliers haben grosse Erwartungen in diese Arbeit
- Probleme der Kundenkarte: kostenintensiv, zu kompliziert und nicht innovativ genug
- Erwartungen: "vergleich" von Hotel Kundensystemen (besonders in der Schweiz) mit ähnlich gelagerten Hotels

Sunstar

Privilège

Starwood Hotels

→ Was machen die?

→ Nachher was wir machen?

- Unterschied ist, dass Sunstar Hotels viele Hotels an verschiedenen Orten in der Schweiz hat. Dadurch ergeben sich viel mehr Möglichkeiten.
- MVH können die Struktur nicht ändern mit ihren drei Hotels an einem Ort.
- Andenmatten gibt ein Beispiel mit Sheraton oder Marriott, das die ganze Zeit mit Newsletter und Punkteständen auf sich aufmerksam macht, was auch nerven kann aber die Leute haben es im Hinterkopf, es ist eine extreme Kommunikationsvariante
- Es sollte vielleicht versucht werden mit neuen Medien zu arbeiten.

App: Lizenzgebühren, aber eine App kann von einem Handy aufs andere transportiert werden.

Karten können gut und schlecht sein, denn viele Leute vergessen diese und dann wird's mühsam. Aber anscheinend funktioniert es auch (siehe Cumulus)

- Timing:

Ende Jahr sollte ein Konzept vorliegen

Graefen hat schon ein Mailing gemacht, dass Ende April (Wintersaison zu Ende) die jetzigen Punkte „aufgelöst“ werden.

Es stellt sich auch die Frage, ob Stammgäste bevorzugt behandelt werden sollten.

→ Aber viel wichtiger: was ist marktfähig? Was ist branchenüblich?

- Für die Hoteliers ist die Realität wichtig, denn sie wollen ähnliche Ansätze wie andere Hotelketten
- Je breiter die Analyse desto besser für sie
- Am Ende wären 3 – 5 Systeme wünschenswert, die dann durchgespielt werden könnten
- 60 % der Gäste sind Schweizer, sich deswegen auch auf Schweizer Hotels konzentrieren.
- Trend in Kundenbindungssystemen ist: Kunden sind schwerer zu binden als noch vor 10 – 15 Jahren.

Damals gab es viel mehr Stammkunden, sie kamen Jahr für Jahr ins gleiche Hotel, heute wird immer was Neues ausprobiert.

Gute Ferien: heute viel mehr Abwechslung

- Fokus Kundenbindung: das konstante bombardieren mit Newsletters führt dazu, dass die Hotels und die Hotelmarke eher präsent. So werden Hotels, die vergleichbare Preise haben, eher diejenigen mit Kundenkarte ausgewählt.
- Familienhotel in Österreich: Hotel Alpenrose in Leermoos kann als Best Practice verwendet werden!

Statt Punkte gibt es Alpenrosen

Karte: Info zu Punkten geben

Angebote einlösen

Geburtstag Newsletter mit Punktestand Hinweis

→Daran erinnert man sich. Beim nächsten Aufenthalt in Österreich wird der Kunde eher wieder diese Hotel wählen.

→**Ziel:** Wenn ein Gast nach Grächen kommt, dann soll er in einem der MVH absteigen, weil das Kundensystem die Loyalität fördert.

Denn das CRM gab immer wieder Infos und gab dem Kunden den Anstoss hier zu buchen, die Punkte einzulösen.

→**Erfolg in der Breite:** Sportgeschäfte, Coiffeur, Souvenir etc. Kooperationen mit anderen Geschäften.

z.B. Leistungen an anderen Orten billiger oder besser was am Ende wieder mehr Umsatz generiert.

Z.B. im Jumbo hat es so viele Angebote. Die Leute gehen dorthin wegen etwas bestimmten wie einer Aktion und kommen trotzdem mit einem vollen Einkaufswagen zurück. Das Ziel ist Zusatz-Verkäufe generieren

Das ist dann die Frage in Grächen:

Beispiel: Helikopterflug anbieten

- Natürlich ist es für die Kunden attraktiver, die nicht vom Betrieb selber kommen.

Diese Leistungen, die selber abgegeben werden sind die billigsten.

- Bis jetzt mit den Punkten:

3'000 Punkte = 1 Person für eine Nacht frei inkl. Frühstück

6'000 Punkte = 2 Personen für eine Nacht inkl. Frühstück

Der Winter ist wertvoller, weil die Nachfrage grösser ist, weswegen es 10'000 Punkte für eine Nacht braucht.

- Weiterer Vorteil: diese Leute, die durch eine Mahnung ihres Punktestandes oder sogar (wie bei MVH) Beendigung des Punktesystems ihre Punkte einlösen, generieren wieder mehr Umsatz weil meistens nicht nur eine Übernachtung gemacht wird.

→ Limitation: die Leute wollen es eher!

- Früher waren Stammgäste nach 3-jährigem Nichtauftauchen keine Stammgäste mehr. Heute ist das anders.
- Diese könnten dann mit dem Newsletter „genervt“ werden und kommen dann vielleicht wieder einmal.

→ **Schlussendlich**: Wie Gast mit interessanten Kundenbindungsleistungen zurückgehalten werden kann!! Z.B. aus drei versch. Systemen ein einziges System

Fragen beantworten:

1. Wie kommen Ihre Gäste an eine Kundenkarte (abgesehen davon, dass sie diese selber online beantragen können).

a. Gibt es dazu einen vorgesehenen Ablauf oder ist das Eigeninitiative der Rezeptionisten?

Das CLP ist nur auf Matterhornvalleyhotel.ch Website, nicht auf den einzelnen Hotelwebsites

Es gibt keine Link von den Hotelwebsites auf dieses Loyalty programme, das könnte man aber machen wenn es ein neues Programme gibt.

Eine Zeit lang wurden die Karten ab 2 -3 Nächten abgegeben.

Das war ein Riesenstress weil der Drucker (sehr teuer!! Und gross) und so viele Karten gingen raus und nichts kam zurück. Auch das Produzieren war mühsam weil die Karten z.B. einklemmten und nicht sauber gedruckt. Zeit wurde vergeudet und der Kunde musste lange warten, es gibt Karten, die nicht mehr identifiziert werden können, weil der Kunde bzw. die Karte nicht registriert wurden.

2. Angenommen, dass der Gast eine Kundenkarte an Rezeption beantragt, wird diese zugeschickt oder gibt es da vorgefertigte Exemplare die nur noch ausgefüllt werden können?

Heute werden die Karten direkt abgegeben, die Karte hat einen Code und diese wird bei einem System registriert. Das ist ein grosser Aufwand, denn die Karte muss im System zugeordnet werden.

In einem solchen kleinen Betrieb gibt es beim Tagesgeschäft viel zu machen, es gibt keine Zeit und Personal-Kapazität für ein solches System. Deswegen gibt es die „anonymen“ Karten, die nicht mehr zugeordnet werden können, weil sie im Stress verloren gegangen worden sind.

Solche Zusatzarbeiten können zur Last werden, irgendwann sind die Karten dann auch ausgegangen, es wurde abgewartet und jetzt werden sie nicht mehr aktiv rausgegeben.

3. Müssen die Kunden selber daran denken, die Kundenkarte vorzuweisen, um die Punkte zu erhalten und ist das auch bei online Buchungen zutreffend?

Beim Check-out wird gefragt, ob man die Kundenkarte hat

4. Wann werden die Punkte gut geschrieben (beim Einchecken, Auschecken bzw. bezahlen)?

Die Abläufe wurden mal mit allen drei Hoteliers festgelegt.

Korreakterweise sollte es so laufen:

- Rechnung wird erstellt
- Kundenkarte wird erfragt
- Rechnung wird dementsprechend verändert (z.B. wenn Punkte abgezogen werden)
- Schluss-Rechnung wird erstellt
- Diese Punkte werden dann wieder gutgeschrieben

→ wenn das vorher gemacht wird, dann werden Punkte doppelt verbucht.

Bei Gutscheinen wird gleich vorgegangen

5. Wenn ein Kunde im Hotel anruft um ein Zimmer zu buchen, wohin gelangt er (an den Receptionisten oder Back-Office)?

Rezeption kann angerufen werden:

Grächerhof: Rezeptionist + Hotelier

Hannigalp: Rezeptionist + Hotelier

Desirée: nur Rezeption

1/3 der Buchungen kommt online (direkt oder booking)

1/3 E-Mails

20 % telefonisch

Riesennachteil für Hotels: booking weil 20% ist Kommission

Vorteil: der Kunde hat die Übersicht was das teuerste / billigste ist, wenn der Kunde flexibel ist, dann ist es für ihn egal, der Preis ist ausschlaggebend.

Für Hotels nicht so machen, dass nur direkt Buchungen Punkte haben, dafür muss das CRM super sein, was schwer zu erreichen ist.

Es könnte aber sein, dass es ein Vorteil gibt bezüglich der Anzahl Punkte, wenn direkt buchen.

Hannigalp: Auf der Homepage: bei einem Umsatz von 1'000 CHF, dann eine Flasche Wein.

Kleine Goodies über richtigen Kanal, das muss aber gelenkt werden, und funktioniert nur wenn die Nachfrage da ist.

Man muss viel probieren und es funktioniert nicht immer gleich gut.

6. Gibt es eine Art Follow-up, nachdem der Kunde abgereist ist? Gibt es da Unterschiede zwischen Kundenkarten-Besitzer und Nicht-Besitzer?

Follow –up wenn nicht gebucht wurde nach Erkundigung funktionieren meist nicht. Das wurde gerade letzte Woche ausprobiert und hat zu keiner einzigen Buchung geführt.



Das Follow-up nach dem Aufenthalt wird ausgelöst beim Check-out und ein E-Mail wird verschickt mit einer Bewertung. Das ist aber recht komplex für die Hoteliers, weil der Text schwer anzupassen ist.

Die Vorlage sollte einfacher sein, denn wenn es zu schwierig ist, dann wird es nicht mehr gemacht (siehe Kundenkarte)

Appendix IV: IHG e-mails

Author's data. Yearly activity

Reminder: Your September **IHG** Rewards Club eStatement is Ready

 IHG Rewards Club eStatement
Mo 19.09, 10:24
Sie 


 Antworten | 


IHG

Newsletter

Erhalten Sie zu viele E-Mails von "IHG Rewards Club eStatement"? [Sie können das Abonnement kündigen.](#)

Accelerate is back! View Images | +Address Book

[Reservations](#) [Earn](#) [Redeem](#) [Enjoy](#)

Eliane Loertscher Club 

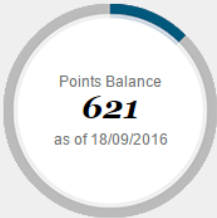
Yearly Activity

Total Points: 621
.....

Elite Qualifying Points: 621
.....

Qualifying Nights: 1
.....

[Manage Your Account](#)



Points Balance
621
as of 18/09/2016

Rewards that take you further

When you book your next Reward Night, it'll count toward reaching your next membership level. It's just one more reason to look forward to Gold Elite.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Author's data. App download e-mail

Download the free **IHG** App and earn up to 1,500 bonus points



Antworten | v

IHG

Newsletter

Erhalten Sie zu viele E-Mails von "IHG Rewards Club"? [Sie können das Abonnement kündigen.](#)

The world of IHG at your fingertips

View with Images | Add to Address Book

IHG Rewards Club

Eliane Loertscher | Member # 595989400 | Login

Reservations | Earn | Redeem | Enjoy

CONNECT Rewards Club | DOWNLOAD App

Helping you find, book and stay the easy way

Start your Appy travels today

Dear Eliane,

Download the **IHG** App and sign in using your membership number to receive **500 bonus points**. Then book via the app and stay before 31 December to receive an additional **1,000 bonus points**. Our handy **IHG** App is your travel companion every step of the way;

- Get instant access to over **5,000 hotels**, in over **100 countries**
- Manage your bookings on the go
- Access your **virtual membership card** at any time
- View your most recent **points activity and balance**, plus **redeem points** when booking

DOWNLOAD NOW

Author's data

re: New message from IHG Mobile

Posteingang x



IHG Mobile <messages+57dfd7f031fac1e74b002c44-57dfd7f031fac1e74b002c45@apptentive.com>

an mich ▾

26. Sep. ☆



Englisch ▾



Deutsch ▾

[Nachricht übersetzen](#)

[Deaktivieren für: Englisch x](#)

IHG IHG-Android

IHG Mobile

Thank you for your feedback and we apologize for the confusion. The point bonus for downloading our app will be manually added to your account within 4-6 weeks. Points are redeemable for Reward Nights, IHG Rewards Club Catalog items, Digital Rewards and IHG Rewards Club Auctions.

Appendix V: Questionnaire 2016a (guests)

Bachelorarbeits-Umfrage zur Kundenkarte der Matterhorn Valley Hotels

Liebe Matterhorn Valley Hotel Gäste,
Ich schreibe meine Bachelor Arbeit zum Thema Kundenkarte der Matterhorn Valley Hotels und würde mich sehr freuen, wenn Sie diese kurze Umfrage ausfüllen würden. Die Antworten werden vertraulich und anonym behandelt. Als Dankeschön wird unter allen Teilnehmern ein Aufenthalt für zwei Nächte für zwei Personen im Doppelzimmer verlost.

Herzlichen Dank für Ihre Mithilfe!

* Erforderlich

Bekanntheit Kundenkarte der Matterhorn Valley Hotels

1. Wie oft sind Sie durchschnittlich in einem der drei Matterhorn Valley Hotels in Grächen pro Jahr? *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- 1-mal pro Jahr
- 2-mal pro Jahr
- 3-mal pro Jahr
- Öfter als 3-mal pro Jahr
- Sonstiges:

2. Kennen Sie die Kundenkarte der Matterhorn Valley Hotels? *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Ja
- Nein

3. Sind Sie im Besitz dieser Kundenkarte? *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Ja Weiter mit Frage 4
- Nein Weiter mit Frage 7

Gründe für Kundenkarte

(Mehrfachantworten möglich)

4. Wieso haben Sie eine Kundenkarte? *

Wählen Sie alle zutreffenden Antworten aus.

- Spass am Punkte sammeln
- Hoffnung auf exklusive Vorteile
- Weil heute überall Punkte gesammelt werden
- Ich melde mich grundsätzlich bei vielen Kundenkarten-Programmen an
- Ich bin sehr häufig in Grächen bzw. in einem der Matterhorn Valley Hotels
- Ich weiss das gar nicht ehr so genau...
- Sonstiges:

5. Lösen Sie Ihre gesammelten Punkte auf der Kundenkarte ein? *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Ja Weiter mit Frage 8
- Nein Weiter mit Frage 6

Weiter mit Frage 8

Einlösung Ihrer Punkte

(Mehrfachantworten möglich)

6. Wieso lösen Sie die Punkte nicht ein? *

Wählen Sie alle zutreffenden Antworten aus.

- Ich vergesse, die Punkte einzulösen
- Nicht genügend Punkte
- Kein Interesse
- Sonstiges:

Weiter mit Frage 8

Gründe für keine Kundenkarte

(Mehrfachantworten möglich)

7. Wieso haben Sie keine Kundenkarte? *

Wählen Sie alle zutreffenden Antworten aus.

- Kein Interesse
- Bedenken wegen Datenschutz
- Zu selten in Grächen bzw. in einem der Matterhorn Valley Hotels
- Bereits bei zu vielen anderen Kundenkarten-Systemen angemeldet
- Ich mag die angebotenen Vorteile der Kundenkarte nicht
- Ich sehe keinen (unmittelbaren) Vorteil für mich
- Sonstiges:

Weiter mit Frage 9

Zufriedenheit Kundenkarte

8. Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit der Kundenkarte? *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval pro Zeile.

	Sehr Zufrieden	zufrieden	eher zufrieden	eher unzufrieden	unzufrieden	sehr unzufrieden	keine Angabe
Anmeldung Kundenkarte	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Angebot der aktuellen Kundenkarte	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Verständlichkeit der Kundenkarte (Homepage, Hotels...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Einfachheit der Einlösung der Punkte	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Weiter mit Frage 9

Wünsche für Kundenkarte

(Mehrfachantworten möglich)

9. Was würden Sie sich von einer neuen Kundenkarte der Matterhorn Valley Hotels wünschen? *

Wählen Sie alle zutreffenden Antworten aus.

- Nichts weiter, ich bin zufrieden....
- Ich wünsche mir saisonal abgestimmte Spezialangebote
- Einfache online-Anmeldung
- Kundenkonto mit Übersicht der Buchungen und Anzahl Punkte
- Verschiedene Kundenkarten, gestaffelt nach Anzahl Buchungen/ Punkten
- Einfache Punkte-Einlösung (ggf. online)
- Die Punkte verfallen nicht nach einem Jahr
- Mehr Partner (z.B. öffentlicher Verkehr, lokale Geschäfte oder Restaurants...), um Punkte zu sammeln

- Exklusive Preisvorteile
- Spätere Check-outs mit der Kundenkarte
- Frühere Check-ins mit der Kundenkarte
- Automatische Upgrades in der Zimmerkategorie
- Tageszeitung gratis aufs Zimmer
- Freies Getränk inklusive
- Punkte als "Zahlungsmittel" für Service im Hotel nutzen (z.B. für Getränke...)
- Exklusive Clubmitglieder-Anlässe / Events
- Sonstiges:

Weiter mit Frage 10

Neues Kundenkarten-System

Diese Informationen helfen bei der Erstellung des neuen Kundenkarten-Systems.

10. Wie würden Sie die Möglichkeit finden, mit der neuen Kundenkarte der Matterhorn Valley Hotels auch in anderen Schweizer Hotels Punkte sammeln und einlösen zu können? *
 Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
sehr schlecht	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	sehr gut

11. In welcher Form wünschen Sie sich die neue Kundenkarte? *
 Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Als rein digitale Version (z.B. als App)
- Eine physische Karte in Kreditkartenformat (wie bisher)
- Einfache Stempelkarte
- Sonstiges:

12. Wie sollten Ihrer Meinung nach Punkte vergeben werden? *
 Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Punkte basierend auf dem Gesamtbetrag des Aufenthalts
- Fixe Punktzahl pro Nacht
- Sonstiges:

13. Wie beurteilen Sie die Möglichkeit, Punkte und Geld als Zahlungsmittel zu kombinieren? *
 So könnten Sie Ihre vorhandenen Punkte einlösen, auch wenn Sie zu wenig für eine vollständige Begleichung des Aufenthalts zur Verfügung haben. Der Wert der eingelösten Punkte würde mit dem Gesamtbetrag verrechnet werden, der verbleibende Rest in Rechnung gestellt.
 Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
sehr schlecht	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	sehr gut

14. Dürfte ein neues Kundenkarten-System Ihrer Meinung nach etwas kosten? *
 Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Ja
- Nein
- Weiss nicht

Weiter mit Frage 15

Persönliche Angaben

15. Geschlecht *
 Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Weiblich
- Männlich

16. Alter *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- 18 - 29 Jahre
- 30 - 39 Jahre
- 40 - 49 Jahre
- 50 - 60 Jahre
- 61 - 69 Jahre
- 69 - 80 Jahre
- 81 - 99 Jahre

17. E-Mail Adresse: *

Die E-Mail Adressen werden vertraulich behandelt.

.....

18. Wären Sie allenfalls bereit, an einer zweiten Online-Umfrage zum Thema der Matterhorn Valley Hotels teilzunehmen? *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Ja
- Nein

Weiter mit Frage 19

Interesse am neuen Kundenkarten-System

19. Hätten Sie Interesse an einer neuen Kundenkarte der Matterhorn Valley Hotels? *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Ja *Ausfüllen dieses Formulars beenden*
- Nein *Weiter mit Frage 20*

Zukünftig keine Kundenkarte

(Mehrfachantworten möglich)

20. Wieso möchten Sie auch in Zukunft keine Kundenkarte? *

Wählen Sie alle zutreffenden Antworten aus.

- Ich bin schon bei so vielen Hotels im Kundenkarten-Club
- Ich bin zu selten in einem der Hotels
- Zu kompliziert
- Kein Interesse
- Zu wenig ansprechende Angebote
- Sonstiges:

Bereitgestellt von



Appendix VI: Questionnaire 2016b (hoteliers)

19.10.2016

Fragebogen Hoteliers

Fragebogen Hoteliers

Diese Umfrage soll dazu dienen, fest zu stellen was Sie als Hoteliers der Matterhorn Valley Hotels zum Thema Kundenkarte denken.

* Erforderlich

Beurteilung der aktuellen Kundenkarte

1. Wie beurteilen Sie die Benutzerfreundlichkeit der Karte für Sie als Hotelier? *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
sehr schlecht	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	sehr gut

2. Wie beurteilen Sie die Angebote der Karte? *

Denken Sie dass Ihre Gäste von der Karte profitieren können?

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
sehr schlecht	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	sehr gut

3. Wie beurteilen Sie das Interesse der Gäste an der Karte? *

Stellen Sie ein grosses oder eher geringes Interesse an der Kundenkarte fest?

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
sehr klein	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	sehr gross

4. Wie beurteilen Sie das Potential einer neuen Kundenkarte? *

Denken Sie, dass eine neue Version der Kundenkarte auf grosses Interesse stossen könnte?

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
sehr klein	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	sehr gross

Mögliche Probleme

19.10.2016

Fragebogen Hoteliers

5. Wo sehen Sie (aus eigener Erfahrung) Probleme bei der aktuellen Version? *

Haben Sie schon miterlebt, dass Kunden beispielsweise unzufrieden waren, dass Probleme aufgetreten sind mit der Art und Weise wie die Kundenkarte dem Gast präsentiert wird?

.....
.....
.....

6. Was könnte Ihrer Meinung nach verbessert werden? *

.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Was erwarten Sie von einer guten Kundenkarte? *

.....
.....
.....
.....

8. Was müsste sich Ihrer Meinung nach an der jetzigen Kundenkarte ändern? *

.....
.....
.....
.....

Notwendigkeit Kundenkarte

9. Denken Sie, dass eine Kundenkarte überhaupt nötig ist für eine kleine Hotelkette wie MVH? *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Ja
- Nein
- Weiss nicht

Weiter mit Frage 10

Kundenkarte notwendig, Begründung

19.10.2016

Fragebogen Hoteliers

10. Wieso denken Sie so? *

.....

.....

.....

.....

Persönliche Angaben

11. In welchem Hotel arbeiten Sie? *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Hotel & Spa Hannigalp
- Matterhorn Valley Hotel Desirée ***
- Turm Hotel Grächerhof ***

12. Wie würden Sie Ihr Hotel am beschreiben? *

Wodurch kann sich Ihr Hotel von den anderen Hotels in Grächen - und noch wichtiger von den anderen Matterhorn Valley Hotels - abgrenzen?

.....

.....

.....

.....

13. Wären Sie bereit, allfällige Fragen zu beantworten? *

Markieren Sie nur ein Oval.

- Ja *Weiter mit Frage 14*
- Nein *Ausfüllen dieses Formulars beenden*

E-mail Adresse / Telefonnummer

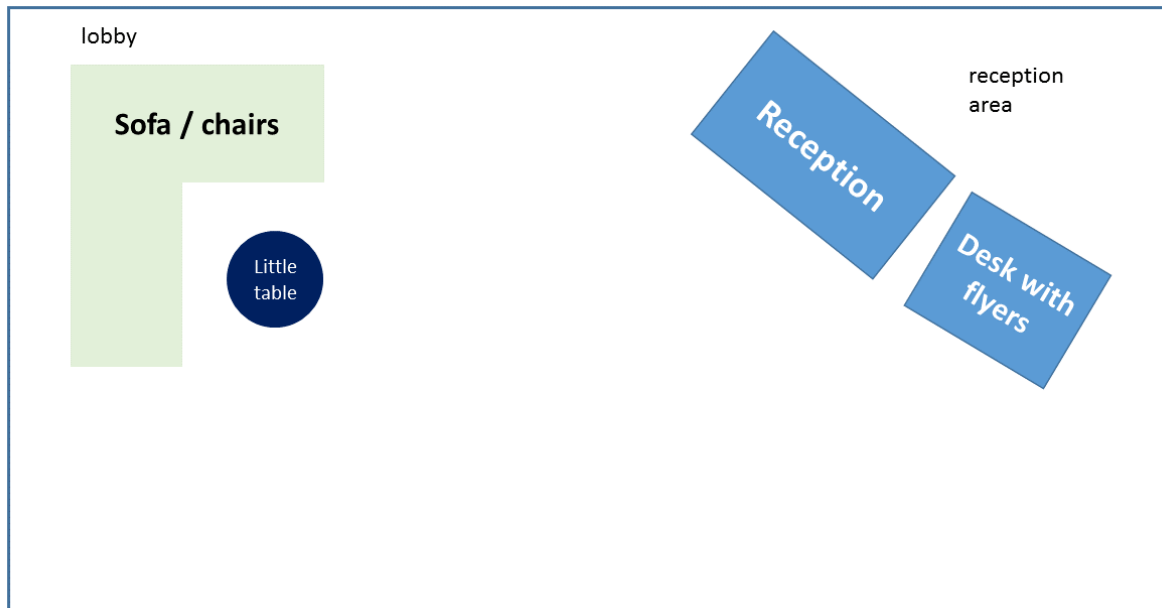
14. Wie sind Sie zu erreichen? (E-Mail Adresse, Telefonnummer... ?) *

.....

Bereitgestellt von
 Google Forms

Appendix VII: Staging experiment

Author's data. Stage plan



stage

Scenario no. 1

Author's data. Scenario no. 1

Guests (2 people)	
Characteristics	Swiss, elderly (around 60), rather conservative but books over phone, does not know about the loyalty programme, nobody told them about loyalty programme
Receptionist	
Characteristics	Between 35 – 45 years old, loves Grächen and the hotel he/she is working in, rather stressed with the whole loyalty programme but still offers it to the guests, likes his/her job and the contact with guests
Extra (approx. 3 people)	
Characteristics	Hotel guests that are in the lobby while the scenario takes place. They are different people that enjoy their holidays at the hotel...

Scenario description – original	
Pre-transaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guest books a room on the phone 2. Receptionist picks up the phone and books the room
Transaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Guest arrives at the hotel 4. Checking in process Guest stays at hotel 5. Guest checks out 6. Guests go home
Post-transaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Guest might check other dates to go back

Author's data. Blueprint scenario no. 1 used in staging

	PRE-Transaction		Transaction			POST-Transaction
Guest	Books a room		Guests arrive at hotel	enjoy holiday	Check out + go home	Might go online + check out offers
Reception		Processing the booking	Welcomes guest + checks them in		Checks guest out	
Customer loyalty programme	?	?	?	?	?	?
<i>Line of visibility</i>		Booking goes into system	Check In process		Check out process	
Hotel software						

Scenario no. 2

Author's data. Scenario no. 2

Guests (2 people)	
Characteristics	Swiss, approx. 40 years old, books online, does not know about the loyalty programme (could not find it online)
Receptionist	
Characteristics	Between 35 – 45 years old, loves Grächen and the hotel he/she is working in, rather stressed with the whole loyalty programme but still offers it to the guests, likes his/her job and the contact with guests
Extra (approx. 3 people)	
Characteristics	Hotel guests that are in the lobby while the scenario takes place. They are different people that enjoy their holidays at the hotel...

Scenario description – original	
Pre-transaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guest books a room online (does not see loyalty programme) 2. Receptionist receives the notification from system & books the room
Transaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Guest arrives at the hotel 4. Checking in process Guest stays at hotel 5. Guest checks out 6. Receptionist asks if the guests would like to join the loyalty programme 7. Guests accepts 8. Card is prepared and points are credited 9. Guests go home
Post-transaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. At home, the guests go online and check out the loyalty programme's offer 11. Might decide to encash those

Author's data. Blueprint scenario no. 2 used in staging

	PRE-Transaction		Transaction				POST-Transaction
Guest	Books room online		guest arrive at hotel				goes online, checks out point & offers Night book again
Reception		Notification from website → books room into system	welcomes guests	checks in the guests ↳ key	checks out the guest + like to join loyalty programme?	loyalty card created + points credited	
Hotel's website	Room is booked over website						offers are shown
Customer loyalty programme	?	?	?	?	join?	points credited	points are shown
line of visibility Hotel Software		room is booked into system		Check in is processed	Check out is processed		


Scenario no. 3 — possible solution

Author's data. Scenario no. 3

Scenario description – possible solution	
Pre-transaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guest books a room online (sees the loyalty programme because the system informs about it) 2. Guest joins the programme 3. Receptionist receives the notification from system & books the room 4. Note pops up that guest would like to join the loyalty programme 5. Card is prepared and sent to guest's home
Transaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Guest arrives at the hotel 7. Checking in process <p>Guest stays at hotel</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Guest checks out 9. Points are credited 10. Guests go home
Post-transaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. At home, the guests go online and check out the loyalty programme's offer 12. Might decide to encash those

Author's data. Blueprint scenario no. 3 used in staging

	PRE-Transaction		Transaction		POST-Transaction
Guest	books a room online (sees l. programme)	joins the programme	guest arrives at hotel + checks in	guest checks out	goes online & checks out points / offers
Reception		books room + creates card (to be sent to guest)	guest is checked in	guest is checked out + points credited	
Hotel's website	room is booked online				offers are shown 
Customer loyalty programme	programme is <u>visible</u> !	guest joins!		points are credited	points are shown
Hotel software		card is created + sent to guest + booking is added to system	check in	check out	

Author's declaration (bachelor thesis)

I hereby declare that I have carried out this final research project on my own without any help other than the references listed in the list of references and that I have only used the sources mentioned. I will not provide a copy of this paper to a third party without the permission of the department head and of my advisor, including the partner company with which I collaborated on this project, with the exception of those who provided me with information needed to write this paper and whose names follow:

Mr. David Graefen

Mr. Olivier Andenmatten

Location, date: Seftigen, 26th of November 2016

Name: 