

**PR COUNCIL: Even Divas Stay In Hostels**

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Traveling can be a great experience for many people. It gives them a whole new insight into new experiences and about other lifestyles/cultures around the world. With traveling comes planning, one must plan where they are going to take shelter for the night(s). Popular options for staying overnight at a destination are hotels, AirBnBs, and hostels.

According to Oxford Language's Lexico Dictionary (n.d), Hostels are "An establishment which provides inexpensive food and lodging for a specific group of people, such as students, workers, or travelers." Hostels are an ideal setup for someone looking to spend less money per night compared to a hotel, etc. This type of overnight staying includes a group of people (typically strangers) staying in a room together or the option of individual rooms. However, there is a stigma around hostels as it does not have the greatest reputation. This stigma might make people not trust others that they are staying with. Some issues are owners worrying that an item might be stolen from them, the travelers might get assaulted in some way, and many other worries that the security of hotels would help relieve.

In an article titled "Even Divas Stay in Hostels" by PR Council (2019), they discuss how the hostel industry was growing by a campaign executed by Lucky Generals and Hotwire involving an A-List celebrity named Mariah Carey. They go into detail about how they created this viral video ad, in an attempt, to reduce the stigma mentioned earlier and how consumers can trust that they are getting a quality experience staying there.

Hotwire started off by researching who would make people excited to see them traveling like the everyday person. Throughout decades of pop culture, you can see celebrities and influencers taking private jets, boats, and any other means of traveling that the average person can't get access to. The everyday person likes to see the luxury experiences that they don't have in their life through the eye of another person. However, after a long time of seeing that, people

will want celebrities to be just like them for once. Hotwire had the intention of just that, they wanted to show that celebrities can travel like anyone else. They wanted to boost the idea of hostels as the industry was declining due to hotels and other overnight places plus due to the negative reputation. Hotwire, also, wanted to make sure the celebrity they used wasn't the main focal point as the hostels were in their commercial.

While trying to execute and accomplish this project effectively, there were worries of any "leaks" coming out about this video. "With multiple people involved in the development of the video, and paparazzi photos being shared of the film shoot, there was a high chance the video would leak ahead of the official launch" (PR Council, 2019). To reduce this risk of the media gaining access to this story, Hotwire had the project ready to launch immediately in case of anything being exposed too early.

The measure of success was definitely impressive as there was over a 60% increase in traffic on Hostelworld's website. The commercial went viral as it was trending #5 on the video charts. As well as post-launch and completion of this project, the traffic still is rising to the website of hostels all over. The video currently sits at 14 million-plus views on Mariah Carey's official Facebook page and has the traction of almost 2,000 article publications from media outlets around the world.

Commercials, especially this one, are a great way to get across to your audience without verbally explaining what your company is. The Mariah Carey commercial was simple and short to the point. It allowed viewers to see what the inside of a hostel looks like as well as them seeing their favorite star "stay" at one. Allowing the genuine, relatable feeling to the everyday person.

If I was to do something differently or make this campaign better, I would still stick with the idea of a commercial but I would gather influencers of all different followings to take a 6-night, 7-day long trip and stay at an actual hostel. On YouTube, an idea called “branding trips” is a huge thing between the video creators on there. Creators are sent on these trips to promote the brand and film the entire trip. I would do something similar to that idea if I was a part of Hotwire’s marketing team.

On the said trip, influencers would have to film “vlogs” (video blogs) for the majority of the trip to showcase their experience staying at a hostel - both the good and bad parts. Once the influencer’s viewers see these videos and have some idea of what hostels are, they would be less hesitant on the idea which would boost the hostel industry and attraction. People are going to trust their favorite creator which will make them excited and more comfortable about using these types of overnight stays. Also, people have a higher chance of wanting to experience the same thing as the creators to say they did the same thing as these influencers. They want to feel that relatability from the more famous individuals of society.

The last thing I would do if I was on Hotwire’s marketing team would be to offer a 10% on any 6-night and 7-day long stay when they sign up for their email alerts or allow the option to add on more nights to your stay once you book for a discounted price too.

Hostels are a great way to save money and learn more about people’s culture when one is traveling. A person can’t experience that when they are in a hotel room but when they put themselves right in the middle of a hostel. It’s a great way to know the local people around the area one is staying at, as well. Hotwire did a great job with showcasing that in their commercial and marketing strategy.

### References

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