ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 6, Issue 8 (2025), pp. 633-645.

The small world hypothesis: How social media revolutionized the luxury hospitality industry?

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Disclosure Statement :	Authors are not aware of any findings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this study and they are responsible for any plagiarism in this paper.
Conflict of Interest :	The authors report no conflicts of interest.
Cite this article :	LAHBABI, A., & MAKLOUL, Y. (2025). The small world hypothesis: How social media revolutionized the luxury hospitality industry? *International Journal of Accounting, Finance, Auditing, Management and Economics*, *6*(8), 633–645.
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Received: 08/06/2025 *Accepted: 21/08/2025*

International Journal of Accounting, Finance, Auditing, Management and Economics - IJAFAME
ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 6, Issue 08 (2025)

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Abstract

Luxury and Internet. While the first one is characterized by scarcity and selectivity, the second is based on large distribution and accessibility. Here begins the paradox of luxury and internet.
Luxury industry being in constant development and looking for opportunities to build a relationship with the customers, the emergence of social media has brought a new way to engage with the audience and be attentive to their needs.
In this framework of this new dynamic, the role of the customer in the service production moves from being passive to active, creating a relational marketing approach that is evolving towards personalized one-to-one relationships. This bilateral relationship advocated by Eiglier and Langeard considers the customer as an integral part of the service during its consumption and leads to the Consumer Empowerment that recognizes the power of the client in determining the strategies of the companies.
This power has been reinforced by the web which has facilitated access to information and made sharing faster, especially with the advent of social media.
The objective of this article is to analyze how the emergence of social media has reshaped the relationship between luxury brands in hospitality industry and consumers, fostering a shift toward personalized and participatory marketing strategies. The analysis is based on a conceptual review of the literature, aiming to explore the evolving dynamics between luxury hospitality industry and consumers in the context of social media.
Finally, the article clarifies its theoretical grounding by relying on Consumer Empowerment and relational marketing to explain the evolving role of the consumer in the luxury sector.

Keywords: Social Media Engagement, Luxury Industry, Co-creation of value, Relational Marketing, Digital transformation
JEL Classification: M30
Paper type: Theoretical Research

ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 6, Issue 8 (2025), pp. 633-645.

1. Introduction

The small world. A hypothesis formulated in 1967 by Milgram which had aroused the interest of researchers and public opinion. Milgram sought to empirically demonstrate the connectedness of individuals in society, asking 296 individuals were mobilized to hand over a file to a specific person without contacting them directly, exclusively by using intermediaries who know each other. The targeted person lived in Boston and worked as an agent in a currency exchange office; this information was known by the participants of this study.

Of the 296 people, 217 gave the file in question to someone they knew, and 64 files reached the targeted person.

The other files that were not received are the result of an unfinished circuit due to the abandonment of the participant from the process. 86 % of participants who reached the goal said they had sent the file to friends or casual acquaintances and the remaining 14% have sent it to their parents.

The average circuit of the chain is composed of 5.2 intermediaries before reaching the final recipient. The resulting average chain length—5.2 intermediaries—formed the empirical basis for what would be named later "six degrees of separation."

This small-world configuration has split communities in two, generating both enthusiasm and concern — especially when applied to epidemiology and network theory. This small world that can be created through the linking of two people could be modeled in the framework of sexually transmitted diseases "STDs": If we need six intermediaries to link any people in the world, and if the network of sexual exchanges followed the same logic, we can quickly reach chaos because of a rapid spread of diseases that we do not know how to treat.

On the other hand, if we have a flow concentrator pivot that we will call “hub”, this network can be easier to control and to attack so as to avoid a catastrophe: this phenomenon is called “A set of dimensionless networks”. Several models have been proposed to analyze this non-dimensionality of networks:

- The creation of short-circuits in a classic network: Instead of having a single path, it is better to create shortcuts to reach the objective in a more efficient way.
- The generation of a network based on the idea that any new network is attracted by an existing popular network: The vertices attract each other and are evaluated by their level of popularity.
- The betweenness centrality measure proposed by Lin Freeman (1979): Intermediaries considered as obligatory passages between several pairs of individuals.

Hence, we notice that this small world hypothesis intersects with both a micro property that highlights the importance of small structures such as organizations, circles, etc. to acquire global characteristics adapted to the notion of the network and the links that are created there.

When we talk about a network, we must first clarify the ambiguity between the whole and the parts that constitute it: the social web is not a homogeneous set of applications but rather a variety of applications.

Their typologies developed by Conole and Alevizou (2010) are categorized into 10 tabs: Media sharing; blogging; social bookmarks; chat rooms; online games and virtual worlds; social networking; recommender systems; media manipulation; instant messaging; wikis and collaborative editing tools; syndication.

While this classification is important, it is necessary to assess the overlaps and evolving nature of these categories, especially as platforms with hybrid features. We can already recognize the obvious differences between the applications that make up the social web: Each has aspects that cannot be generalized and applied to all social media.

Social networking sites represent according to Conole and Alevizou (2010), a distinct category of social media. Boyd and Ellison (2007) present three main characteristics of social networks. They allow to:

- Build a public or semi-public profile, within a predefined system
- Generate a list of other Internet users with whom they are in contact
- Browse our own contact list and the lists of other users

Four years later, Boyd updates this definition by adding a fourth characteristic: "The enhancement of peripheral awareness". Indeed, thanks to social networks, the Internet user can add a display of time markers from his daily life (Marwick and Boyd, 2011).

This dynamic of networks characterized by the links making the world smaller and more fragile do not concern only epidemiology or science. We can make parallel in the economic world and industries like the luxury market, built on scarcity and exclusivity.

Once these industries are confronted with the speed and openness of the digital platforms, the way of making business change. The “small world” hypothesis becomes a new way of understating luxury mindset and navigating between the tensions rarity and boundless, which is a viral logic of the internet.

Even though the “small world” model has been applied to network theory and information diffusion, only few studies have investigated in the transformation of luxury service industries under the influence of the digital channels.

Moreover, existing literature on luxury and digital impact often focuses on product-based brands like fashion or cosmetics, creating an important gap in understanding how luxury services handle the conflicting contradiction of exclusivity and digital accessibility.

- ***The network effect: Between social networks and social media***

Social networks are characterized by their ease of use, speed and immediacy. We find these specificities in different categories of social media with different degrees.

This common point often leads to a conceptual conflation between social networking which is often used to refer to the activity of the Internet user on social media, when really, this term comes from a single type of social media which is the social networking sites taking its source from “Social Networking sites”

"Web 2.0", a term coined by Tim O'Reilly and his colleagues (Musser et al., 2007) has also challenged researchers in CALL "Computer-Assisted Language Learning" who are motivated by exploring the potential of technologies and their impact on language learning.

We often notice that the terms "social networks and social media" are used in the same context to refer to different social features on the Internet. A social network is by definition a site whose main objective is to connect users with each other.

It offers several features such as a presentation space, a search tool and means of exchange and sharing such as instant messaging.

This same social network is only one element constituting social media that brings together different content publishing sites. Publications can be in the form of articles, videos, photographs, etc. used by Internet users to express their opinions or dialogue with other individuals. Social media therefore brings together applications, features, sites, etc. that create social and conversational interaction between Internet users.

The terms social media and social network seem to be interchangeable; however, they have distinct differences. Essentially, social media is a platform for broadcasting and sharing information, whereas social networking is a platform to communicate with one another.

Additionally, social media primarily aims at marketing by transmitting information and content through messages to a large audience, while social networking is created for building relationships and discussions, involving two-way communication.

Social networks are represented by two main families:

- **Social contact networks**: They promote the creation of a knowledge network by offering search tools for other members. Facebook is one of the key examples of this category which provides users with several interactive features.

- **Content social networks**: They favor the sharing of content with a large community while remaining original. If Pinterest favors image sharing, Twitter relies on the publication of short messages.

When it comes to social media, they are grouped around four families:

- **Publishing social media**: Present in the form of blogs and sites such as wikis targeting a large community.
- **Sharing social media**: These include several types of content social networks mentioned above.
- **Social networking media**: They include social contact networks; Internet users who join wish to develop their circle of acquaintances for personal or professional reasons.
- **Social discussion media**: Discussion forums are a representative example of this type of social media, where the exchange and sharing of information is very present.

The network effect has a different meaning with social media as advanced by O'Reilly and his team. The comments generated by Internet users, the sharing of publications, the creation of groups… make the task easier compared to the presence of groups before the 2000s.

This has multiplied the effect of viral spread on the internet thanks to the "EWOM - Electronic Word-of-Mouth", the influence of bloggers and journalists, as well as Opinion Leaders and Lead Users.

The possibilities that being developed over time for the teaching-learning of languages are partly thanks to the international boom that the Internet is experiencing. Through the advent of the various social web applications, researchers in Computer-Assisted Language Learning highlight the educational potential on which they can base themselves to move to a higher level of learning.

We are also interested in research on computer-managed communication “CMO – Computer-Mediated Communication” which emphasizes an equally ambiguous concept of “community”. Being a member of a community does not necessarily rhyme with a high level of commitment and active participation.

We often associate communities and social media with a significant level of engagement and joint participation, which prompts us to take a closer look at the interactional practices that can result from these spaces of exchange.

Social networks are characterized by the existing paradox between the rarity of strong ties and the importance of weak ties, which prompts us to reconsider the socio-interactional relationships supported by Granovetter (1973).

This same phenomenon was treated before the appearance of social networks by Wellman & Gulia in 1999.

What becomes striking is the paradox between rarity and overflow: While social media platforms encourage fragile ties, luxury industries depend on controlled access and strong ties. This tension sheds light on the algorithm of digital virality, inviting brands and services to rethink their interactions with communities where speed is a key characteristic.

The effect of the network is not only related to a technical part but has social effect as well – each new user brings values to the other creating a cumulative dynamic which is of interest for the community members.

Additionally, algorithms play today a decisive role in amplifying or reducing these effects. Recommendations, personalized feeds with suggestions and trending topics act as invisible gatekeeper of attention.

For luxury brands in hospitality, this algorithmic mediation represents at the same time an opportunity to address targeted communities and a risk to be diluted in mass communication content. Understanding the balance between algorithmic and human connections is vital to navigate the paradox between scarcity and virality.

- ***The dynamism of relationships***

Mark Granovetter's weak link theory, which was developed in 1973, is inspired by the relationships developed by individuals on the Internet and represents an important factor that explains the success of social networks. Although developed prior to the digital age, the theory remains relevant for analyzing the success of current social platforms.
This theory states that there are two types of relationships for an individual: Strong ties that connect the individual to their family and close friends, and weak ties that connect them to a larger and more varied network. The study carried out specifies that the person paradoxically benefits from his weak tie relationships rather than those with strong ties.
The more people maintain distant relationships, the stronger the influence exerted in comparison to that exerted by his close entourage. Social cohesion is created, and information circulates more effectively between people who do not necessarily have common points or pre-established relationships.
We can argue that the dynamism of the relationships that exist between individuals from a digital point of view is supported by this paradox of weak and strong ties. Many networks are born through spontaneous relationships based on weak ties, but which progress towards a process of belonging to a group supported by the collective work.
This generates a better circulation of information intelligently studied by the developers of relational platforms based on the exchange, on the absence of precise rules, since the instinct of the individual guides him to organize himself in groups or to identify with it.
The paradox of strong and weak ties points out how the digital communities are growing: It starts with casual connections that evolve into different forms of belonging like the user-generated content (UGC), transforming individual voices to collective movement.
Yet, when this logic is duplicated in industries built on exclusivity as luxury hospitality, the contrast stands out. While digital is fueled by mass contribution, luxury is built on curation and controlled narratives. This tension precisely marks the point where the paradox of luxury and internet unfolds.
A group needs to be animated with user-generated content; a concept commonly popular under the abbreviation UGC. This concept that emerged from the new generation on the Internet has been identified by several sources, one of the best known of which the study is conducted by the OECD "The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development" in 2007.
To identify User Created Content UGC, three criteria must be met:
1) Publication of content on an electronic platform accessible to all (website, blog, etc.) or to a limited group of people (page of a social network, etc.).
2) Creative effort by going outside the institutional or commercial framework and publishing new content or adapted one to existing work where the added value is perceived.
3) Creation of content in a setting outside the institutional context which does not necessarily follow professional practices.
The second section focuses on the concept of servuction and its components, to analyze how the paradox of luxury and the internet co-exist in the luxury hotel industry.

2. The specificities of service marketing

2.1 Servuction: The Components of Service Marketing

The concept of servuction was developed by Pierre Eiglier and Eric Langeard in 1987. This neologism which combines the words "services" and "production" describes the process of production of the service while highlighting the role played by the customer in the production system of the service to optimize the impact of marketing strategies.

According to Eiglier and Langeard, quality is made up of two elements, one objective which is attached to the physical aspects of the product, and the other one is subjective which is manifested by the satisfaction of the customer through his perception and his expectations.
The concept of service quality developed by the two researchers includes five types of quality, which are:
- **Institutional quality**: It is associated to the image reflected by the service company.
- **The quality of the internal organization**: In reference to all the elements not visible to consumers and contribute to the performance of the service.
- **The quality of interaction**: This results from the contact between the consumer and the staff members, as well as physical support.
- **Physical quality**: Associated to the physical elements visible to consumers such as the physical environment.
- **The quality of results**: It is the elementary quality of the output resulting from the service which is affected by the judgment of the consumer, and which includes the interaction between the customers and all the elements of the service.

The challenge raised by this concept of servuction by Eiglier and Langeard is to decide whether the five types of quality must be taken into consideration or whether there are more important qualities than others to be privileged.
Researchers now characterize the relationship between the customer and the company as a dialogue and not a monologue. This translates into the rise of the power of the consumer who gets involved in the virtual environment marked by social media and who becomes a co-creator of the added value delivered by the company.
Relational strategies are evolving towards personalized one-to-one relationships, and the information provided by consumers has become an important vector of wealth for the company.
This bilateral relationship, advocated by Eiglier and Langeard considers the customer as an integral part of the service during its consumption and represents a strategic step for the company.
The service then represents both the objective and the desired result of the “servuction” system for a luxury hotel. In service offer from a general point of view and in hotel business precisely, we distinguish two types of service: Main services and auxiliary services.
The first category is intended to satisfy the customer's main need, while the second category adds value to basic services or facilitates access to them (Eiglier and Langeard, 1987; Grönroos, 1984, 1993).
The service components cannot be dissociated according to how it is provided (Grönroos, 1984). Non-dissociation depends on the participation of customers and collaborators in the production of the service (Bitner, 1990).
Servuction, considering its characteristics of intangibility and relativity of the experience lived by the customer, the feedback of dissatisfied customers quickly create a negative virality which can lead to the loss of current and potential customers (Effect of churn).
Three elements characterize the servuction according to Eiglier and Langeard: intangibility, inseparability and heterogeneity.
A service, by nature intangible, is considered as an experience for the customer and an action for the company. This intangibility makes it difficult to evaluate before it is consumed, and sometimes even impossible for some customers (Bateson et al., 1977). The experience is delivered to the customer at the time of its production, which is part of its simultaneous nature (Grönroos, 1984).
For the heterogeneity of the service, it relates to the interpersonal relationship between the customer and the providers of the service, as well as the overall evaluation of the subjective service.

Traditionally, this assessment was based on the role occupied by provider of the service (Parasuraman et al, 1985). In 1990 Bitner et al. mentioned three elements for assessing customer satisfaction with a service relationship:
• The personalization of the service by the staff member in contact with the customer
• Problem solving
• Unforeseen elements that arise during customer experience
The heterogeneity of the service is also explained by its systemic nature of production: The performance of the elements of servuction influences the overall result of the experience (Bateson, 1977; Zeithaml et al., 1985). Each experience is unique. Personalization is a watchword in service, especially when it comes to business sectors such as luxury hotels.
An essential point to underline is that servuction creates a transformation in the position of the customers, leading them from passive receivers to active co-creators of value. The paradox is that within this process of co-creation amplified by social media and digital platforms in general, a single successful experience can generate loyalty while disappointment can trigger negative virality.
In industries like luxury hospitality, the tension between havine a unique experience and make it exposed online makes the servuction a strategic challenge rather than being just a marketing model.

3. The paradox of luxury and the internet

3.1 Between scarcity, selectivity and accessibility

Luxury and Internet. While one service is characterized by scarcity and selectivity, the other one is based on large distribution and accessibility. Here begins the paradox of luxury and internet. Communicate on the internet? Creating a website? Communicate to sell? Luxury brands have long asked themselves these questions, remaining skeptical of when to act.
Based on this reflection, the Internet is perceived as opportunity for development through its presence in the daily life of individuals (Lemoine, 2012).
This has also been validated by various studies carried out in the 1990s to understand the correlation between the perceptions of professionals and consumers. However, while early research has identified digital media as a threat to luxury identity, more recent works embrace digital integration without completely addressing the contradictions it introduces.
Luxury is a sector that is constantly developing by seeking new avenues of innovation and levers of evolution. Following this reflection, the Internet represents an opportunity for development and dynamism through its strong presence and anchoring in the daily life of individuals (Lemoine, 2012).
Internet appeared to the public in 1994. This certainly delighted consumers as a new way to stay connected with the world, but luxury brands felt wary of its use.
Internet refers to wide dissemination of the message conveyed, loss of control and dilution of the values of scarcity and exclusivity so prized by luxury.
Apart from the opposition between rarity and mass reach, the rise of internet challenged the traditional codes of luxury. What was once showcased in high-end magazines and selective runways had to coexist in the best way with live-stream and viral hashtags.
Luxury started to become about how stories and communities interpret the objects and services, loosing a part of the controlled narrative that brand once mastered.
This was further reinforced by research conducted on the risks of Internet use in the luxury sector (Nyeck and Houde, 1996). Thirty years after the appearance of the Internet, the luxury market has evolved rapidly, and all brands have created their websites and developed digital visibility. Some luxury houses have even launched into e-commerce to accelerate the sale of their products and services.

ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 6, Issue 8 (2025), pp. 633-645.

For example, Burberry was identified as one of the pioneers in the luxury sector to embrace digital by using the livestream of the fashion shows and using interactive brand presence on Instagram and Snapchat.
Conversely, Hermès had a more cautious approach, by refusing for a long time to engage in e-commerce for certain flagship products, to preserve scarcity, one of the characteristics of luxury market.
In this perspective of continuous development, the paradox of luxury and the Internet was quickly felt between the elitist image so conveyed through the privileged channels of communication and distribution (Allérès et al., 1991), and the expansion that had to be controlled to preserve their brand image and increase their notoriety.
We are faced with two different but complementary reflections: that of the experts and those of the consumers. From the point of view of experts, the Internet makes it possible to disseminate messages accessible to all Internet users (Chaffey et al, 2003; Okonkwo, 2009): it is a real unlimited, instantaneous medium, where communication can be done through several means: photos, videos, presentations of products and services…
According to Okonkwo (2009), this communication cannot be controlled since Internet users can take control of the message conveyed. They are no longer considered passive actors but rather active ones, especially after the appearance of forums and blogs where electronic word of mouth has increasingly intensified.
More recent studies confirm that luxury brands must be able now to manage a hybrid identity, by combining the paradox of exclusivity and digital transparency (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2020; Dion & Arnould, 2022).
The way experts think about the use of the internet has changed over time, most are favorable and operate according to two different approaches: A proactive attitude in search of new opportunities offered by the media, and a more traditional one which aims to adapt to reality.
A striking example is **Balenciaga**, which has adopted social media with a provocative style. The brand use digital including virtual shows in games like *Fortnite* and meme-based campaigns, reinforcing its cultural position among younger consumers (Kapferer, 2021).

3.2 Towards a change in consumer power

The position of consumers has gone from a passive state where they accepted what companies offered them to a position where they have become consumer-actors, making their voices and their needs heard, and directly impacting the decision-making process in management.
This approach, which is part of "Consumer Empowerment", reflects the transition between brand-driven communication to co-creation involving the participation of the customers (Labrecque et al., 2013; Schivinski et al., 2022). Consumers demand more influence over the narratives of the brand and not only expect interaction.
This power of the consumer has been reinforced by the web which has facilitated access to information and made sharing faster, especially with the advent of social media.
The consumer has gone from a passive receiver of the different actions of the brands (Jean-Noël Kapferer, 1990) to an actor who influences the decisions taken by companies by exercising a power that leaves him at the heart of brand strategy.
The digital channel is therefore becoming a challenge to be met in order to follow the market trend and meet the growing needs of connected consumer actors. In servuction, social media have become an essential tool for communicating with users and establishing the image of a company in constant interaction with its customers.
Also, experts believed in the past that the use of the Internet in luxury depended on the category of the product or service. Now they are aware that internet is compatible with all luxury brands and being absent from it could penalize them. Companies are now adopting Conversational

Marketing by involving the consumer in the decision-making process to develop their products and services.
Four Seasons Hotels developed a multi-platform approach using social medias, mainly Twitter and Instagram to create conversational channels with their guests, by responding in real-time and capitalizing on loyalty through personalized attention.
Several types of collaboration have arisen from this consumer-business relationship, including crowdsourcing, or participatory production, which calls on the creativity and intelligence of a group of people to deal with a given subject. The digital context has redefined the role of the consumer from a passive actor who receives what is offered to him to an active actor who imposes his choices.
Digital development encourages the company to become more customer-oriented by integrating a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system which will provide it with a large amount of information (Big Data).
This information is largely collected from social media, which is considered a place of sharing and dialogue allowing the company to listen to its customers, seek new niches and identify communities of influencers.
Empowerd customers are looking not only for transactions, but also for symbolic involvement and emotional connection with brands. Their engagement is not limited to the purchase itself as they are co-creators of the narrative and meanings around the services in luxury hospitality, and they impact through their sharing how other potential customers perceive the experience. However, this new power detained by customers introduces a new kind of fragility for brands. The same platforms that power the customers to collaborate and co-create could also magnify criticism and contribute to spreading negative experiences.
For luxury brands in hospitality whose value depends strongly on reputation and controlled narrative and storytelling, co-creation involves a delicate balancing to maintain whilst encouraging consumer participation without compromising the shape of their identity.
Empowering consumers leads brands as well to embrace a new level of transparency, in an era where information circulates in an instant way and promises not always being fulfilled. Traditionally, luxury hospitality, which is based on discretion and controlled messaging must now integrate new mechanisms of authenticity to meet these new forms of expectation. Transparency is now being empowered to a sign of credibility and loyalty.
In parallel, consumer empowerment was extended to collective movements and no longer limited to individual contributions. Activist groups and online communities can unite around shared values and put pressure on brands.
This creates a new challenge for luxury hotels to continue navigating guest satisfaction and a broader societal expectation. This collective voice is now shaping a new strategic direction for luxury brands.
In 2013, and according to Armel Nebia, 80% of Internet users are members of a social media: This rate is increasing year after year, and social media are gradually carving out their market share worldwide.
Social media are changing the balance in the communication of brands with their consumers: Organizations are developing themselves; new professions and skills are emerging because it is becoming inevitable to be trained in digital. In servuction, digital interpersonal relationships are multiplying between consumers and companies (Gensollen, 2006).

4. Conclusion

Customers openly search for information on the services offered, use virtual reality to get a preliminary idea of the service and speak up to encourage or discourage other consumers from making a purchase.

ISSN: 2658-8455
Volume 6, Issue 8 (2025), pp. 633-645.

In luxury hospitality industry, this shift is significant: real-time feedback, smart technologies,… created new customer expectations and ways of satisfaction. Research proved that tech-enabled personalization impacts positively loyalty and connection through emotions in high-end service contexts (Ali et al., 2018; Neuhofer et al., 2015).
From the point of view of consumers, dynamism and the innovative side of the Internet are its main characteristics (Nyeck and Roux, 1997).
Having information at any time of the day is a luxury that did not exist before the emergence of Internet; this impersonal and complex interface can give them the impression of being treated the same way as everyone else, obviously depending on the category of the product or service targeted.
Age is a determining factor in consumers' perception of the Internet. Nyeck and Roux (1997) identified a split between the analysis of consumers over 45 years old and the youngest, who are more adept at new technological tools. Age is also a decisive criterion in the clientele in luxury hospitality industry since this sector is characterized by senior clients, sometimes not very comfortable with technological tools, and who are getting used to them more in their daily lives.
However, age is no longer a significant variable in the world of luxury with the aging of the population curve: the young people of the 1970s are now in their forties who are increasingly comfortable with the tools online. In the world of luxury, the immaterial is strongly present (Bechtold, 1991) and brands play an essential role in this sense: They convey their values by telling stories and narratives from their cultural and geographical roots, but also of their ontological function while maintaining their inaccessible image (Keller, 2009).
In addition to the advantages put forward on the use of the Internet, several luxury brands have long hesitated to use the web because of the risks associated with this communication tool (Larbanet and Ligier, 2010).
The notion of interaction has also evolved over time by highlighting the relational dimension between the customer and the provider of the service. Business professionals are increasingly open-minded by adopting a two-way approach and favoring tools based on exchange.
Dall'Olmo Riley and Lacroix (2003) conducted a study where the evolution of the notion of interaction was less obvious. At that time, experts began to detect the potential of the Internet as a tool for developing relationships with Internet users, through interaction platforms, especially those of social media.
In parallel, in this new era with the rise of artificial intelligence and predictive analytics, algorithms are now anticipating guest preferences creating an environment of tailored stay. While this hyper-personalization increases loyalty and relationship built with thus customers, it also raises questions and opens debates about the limits of data-driver intimacy and privacy.
At the same time, digital interaction in luxury hospitality is a matter of efficiency whilst keeping the authenticity. Consumers are expecting a global coherence between the online presence and the offline experience. Thus, luxury hotels are facing the challenge of combining human touch with technological innovation, ensuring the digital tools are contributing to the reifnorcment of the brand’s identity, rather than dilute it.
Despite this awareness of the growing importance of this tool, few brands in the luxury segment at that time offered interactive interfaces with their current and potential customers. Dall'Olmo Riley and Lacroix were also interested in the vision of consumers who were skeptical in the early 90s, regarding the compatibility between the world of luxury and the Internet.
The results of this research highlight the seduction of Internet users by the Internet as a means of accessing the content of the brand universe, its history, its portfolio of products or services. Brands have long hesitated to display prices since luxury is traditionally considered priceless, even less when it comes to a service experience where we find emotion and insertion in a special universe.

Consumers claim that social media have brought them a real evolution in their search, allowing them to be better connected in this "small world".

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