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Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science

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Case Description

The cruise industry is a dominant contributor to the United States tourism sector, having added roughly \$53 billion to the United States economy in 2018 (Cruise Lines International Association, 2019). Within the cruise industry, Carnival Corporation & PLC prides itself as the ‘world’s largest leisure travel company’, employing over 150,000 people globally, and transporting roughly 13 million guests on an annual basis to over 700 international ports, across nine brands (Carnival Corporation & PLC, 2019).

Carnival’s scope and success can be attributed to fulfilling guests’ utopian impulse through the company’s dedication to providing a ‘dreamworld’ of fun, embedding a postmodern aesthetic of abundance, access, and cheerfulness in their entertainment architecture (Kolberg, 2016). As such, Carnival operates as a microcosmic democracy for guests, functioning as a quasi-utopian experience of togetherness, where symbols of wealth and prestige are indiscriminately disseminated to mass audiences in an indulgent fashion.

While Carnival was initially branded as the ‘Fun Ship’ experience (Kwortnik, 2006), the company has since amassed a scandalous history of environmental offences, thus tainting their brand image due to widespread public backlash and negative PR. As a result of the company’s multiple environmental violations such as the illegal dumping of plastic and oily discharge into Oceans which amounted in fines of \$60 million dollars (Nace, 2019), the Chief Marketing Officer Council – comprised of a global network of senior marketing executives – selected Carnival Corporation as one of the most “bruised, battered and embattled brands” of 2019 (Walker, 2020).

In an effort to salvage corporate reputation and comply with environmental regulations, Carnival produced an extensive sustainability report in 2018, setting sustainability goals and outlining their respective initiatives. The report focuses on the three pillars of sustainability – ecological, economic and social (General Assembly of the United Nations, 2015) – by transparently delineating company policies and referencing active engagement with identified key stakeholders including: home and destination port communities, employees, travel professionals, non-governmental organizations, business organizations, investors, suppliers, government agencies, media, and guests.

Engagements with stakeholders such as home and destination port communities, non-governmental organizations and employees received great emphasis in the sustainability report, with fewer initiatives directed towards targeting other key stakeholders. Most notably, environmental initiatives targeting guests were lacking from the sustainability report. As guests wield a considerable amount of influence on both the environment and company reputation due to their sheer volume, introducing sustainability schemes into the brand architecture which aims to target and engage guests could positively impact ecological, economic and social factors.

This research is centred around providing practical recommendations for how Carnival can foster sustainable habits amongst guests, grounding the recommendations within social psychological theories and practical case-studies. Addressing Carnival's CEO and President Arnold W. Donald, the memorandum and the respective recommendations and justifications were written with careful consideration of Carnival's position and reputation in the market, aiming to bolster public perception and exceed compliance to environmental regulations by pioneering innovative means to marry sustainability and hedonism in the seascape through guest engagement.

Memorandum

To: Arnold W. Donald, President and CEO, Carnival Corporation & PLC

From: A Consumer Psychology Consultant

Date: 7th April, 2020

Dear Arnold Donald,

As Carnival is the world's largest leisure travel company, it is refreshing to review the company's extensive, comprehensive and transparent sustainability report. I commend Carnival's efforts to reduce carbon footprints, comply with environmental initiatives and policies, engage with local communities and charities, and promote environmental awareness and compliance amongst all worldwide employees. As a dominant force in the seascape, a heightened commitment to enhancing environmentally conscientious and sustainable travel practices amongst guests would dramatically facilitate waste reduction, while functioning to promote an environmentally-friendly brand and culture. Having compiled and reviewed information pertaining to Carnival's environmental practices and performed a competitive analysis to identify avenues for growth, I have outlined some recommendations to bolster sustainability, positioning Carnival as an industry-leading force in the environmentalism arena.

Recommendation One: Targeting Plastic and Food-Waste through Material Affordances

As cruises are marked by a high level of consumption, Carnival has a duty to safeguard the environment by reducing plastic and food-waste. Inspired by Carnival's Seabourne brand which introduced reusable glass water-bottles to reduce plastic-waste (Dolven & Brasileiro, 2019), I suggest that Carnival incorporates this measure into the parent-brand architecture and replaces all plastic water-bottles with bottles made from glass or reusable paper carton, similar to Norwegian Cruise Lines (Norwegian Cruise Line, 2020). This measure will substantially reduce plastic-waste as nearly 15% of all litter derives from beverage containers (Plastic Oceans International, n.d.), and will function to signal an ethos of sustainability, commitment, and consistency to key stakeholders. Water-filling stations can be installed throughout the ship to ensure that guests have unrestricted access to water, serving as a visible marker to promote water-bottle reuse. Similarly, recyclable goods can be disposed of in recycling stations installed throughout the ship, so that guests can responsibly dispose of waste with ease.

In regards to food-waste, there are staggering statistics which highlight that globally, roughly one-third of food produced for consumption results in waste (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, n.d.) As buffets are a central component of Carnival Cruises and findings show that nearly half of all food at buffets is wasted (Himmelstein, 2017), I suggest that Carnival changes the default options at their buffets to reduce food-waste by donating the currently-used plates to charities and using smaller plates instead, and swapping beef in the buffets for a vegan meat-alternatives, restricting beef consumption to onboard restaurants. Left-over food which meets safety regulations can be donated to on-port charities and organisations, strengthening relations with on-port community stakeholders.

Recommendation Two: Targeting Social Norms through Introducing a Commitment Form

To raise environmental awareness and bolster compliance, I suggest that Carnival introduces a sustainability form to be distributed to all guests at the check-in phase, prior to embarking on the ship. The form can detail Carnival's commitment to sustainable behaviour and environmentalism, explicitly defining and delineating the measures that guests can take to be eco-friendly such as recycling on-board, and reusing towels to reduce water usage. The wristbands and room numbers of the guests can be used to trace and register compliance, where a point system can be introduced for guests to accrue up to a set limit of points daily. Points can be logged when guests hold their wristband up to a monitor on recycling bins after recycling, and points for towel reuse can be collected when guests use the weight-sensitive 'reuse' hook to be installed in cabin bathrooms which activates the point system for the room number when the weight of the towel is registered. As an incentive, accumulated points could be used for discounts across a range of Carnival's offerings, such as spa treatments, excursions, or at onboard restaurants.

Guests can have the option to sign the form, signalling their commitment to environmental efforts. As an additional incentive to comply to the program and as a means to reinforce commitment, guests who sign the form can receive a specially designed, Carnival branded reusable water-bottle, distinct from the reusable water-bottles that other guests have access to. Functioning as a symbolic representation of environmentalism and the commemoration of an experience, the Carnival-branded eco-friendly water-bottle would serve

as a visual reminder of both the guest's and the company's emphasis on sustainable practices, promoting a brand identity aligned with environmentalism.

Recommendation Three: Targeting Representations by Anthropomorphising Carnival's Sustainability Initiatives

As cruises sell experiences, I suggest that Carnival anthropomorphises the environmental initiatives, constructing narratives and engaging in storytelling through Shelly the Turtle. Following Carnival's mandatory safety-briefing conducted prior to embarking (Carnival, n.d.), an entertainment-infused, narrativized animation can be played where Shelly discusses the importance of environmentally conscientious behaviour and Carnival's efforts, and tells guests where they can 'look out' for her on the ship. A miniature caricature of Shelly can be installed above the reuse towel-hook and on recycling stations, where she can 'wink' when points have been registered. Additionally, Shelly can be installed on water-stations, and on walls at buffets with a text speech-bubble encouraging guests to put less food on their plates by reminding them that they can visit the buffet more than once. The video will culminate in outlining opportunities for action by the guests, providing information on where guests can sign the environmental compliance form and receive the Shelly-inspired Carnival water-bottle had they not already, as well as highlight available voluntourism excursions.

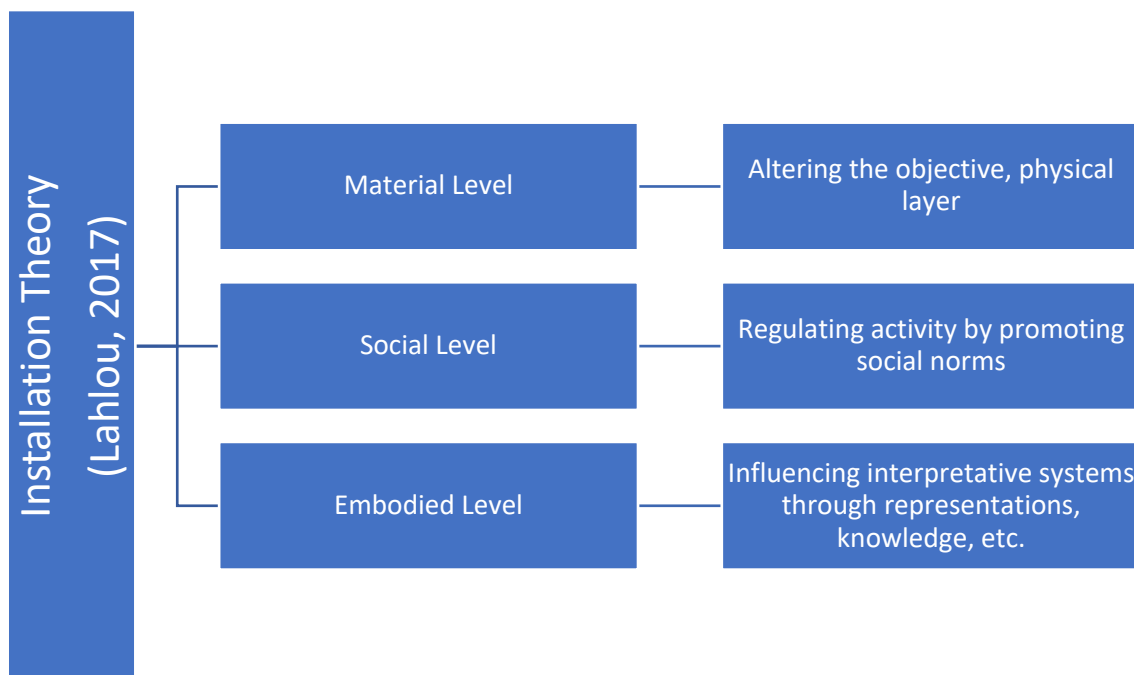
Voluntourism is a booming trend which combines volunteering and tourism to provide experiences which benefit local communities and gives tourists the opportunity to immerse themselves in a local culture and give back. As Carnival currently does not offer voluntourism excursions, I suggest that Carnival works with destination communities and organisations to offer voluntourism experiences which maximise beneficial impact for NGOs and destination communities and provide guests with highly engaging, immersive and memorable experiences. Voluntourism would promote a symbiotic relationship between guests and local communities, raising awareness around environmentalism and fostering meaningful engagements which benefits a multitude of key stakeholders.

Yours Sincerely,

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Theoretical Justifications

The recommendations provided in the memorandum are grounded in a plethora of social psychological theories, which will be delineated within Lahlou's (2017) installation theory framework. According to Lahlou, installations funnel, scaffold, and regulate human behaviour, and are comprised of three levels: the material environment and physical space which relates to the first recommendation, social regulation which pertains to the second recommendation, and embodied competencies connected with the third recommendation.



Recommendation One: The Material Level

As the construction of the environment influences behaviour by triggering habits (Lahlou, 2017; Verplanken & Wood, 2006), successful interventions must involve aligning the environmental features with desirable behaviours. The configuration and affordances of the material environment construct the 'choice architecture', which summarises how choices and are presented, structured, and framed, thus impacting behaviours (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). Therefore, any change in the physical and choice environment can 'nudge' individuals, where a 'nudge' is "any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people's behaviour in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008, pp. 5-6). A powerful mechanism to modify the choice architecture

is to carefully set a default option, as people gravitate towards defaults (Schubert, 2017). Therefore, defaulting the distribution of eco-friendly water-bottles would function to nudge guests to be more conscientious of their plastic consumption. The installation of water-bottle and recycling stations would serve as an additional affordance in the choice architecture, providing guests with a visible means to consume sustainably and serving as a reminder to engage in eco-friendly behaviour. These measures would serve to reduce plastic-waste through embedding green nudges in the choice architecture, targeting behaviours through defaults and material affordances.

Additional defaults which can be set to promote pro-environmental behaviour (henceforth referred to as PEB) in relation to food-waste involves reducing the plate sizes in the buffet, and substituting beef in the buffet for vegan alternatives, confining beef consumption to the onboard restaurants. A field experiment conducted by (Kallbekken & Sælen, 2013) which aimed to reduce food-waste at buffets in hotels by reducing the plate size and introducing social cues for guests to reduce portion sizes exemplified how the respective green nudges can effectively reduce food waste by about 20%. While guest reception to alterations in the choice architecture is an important consideration, the findings from Kallbekken and Sælen (2013) suggest that changing the plate sizes will not affect customer satisfaction rates with the buffet. The beef policy would utilise a framing effect to symbolically position beef as a scarce resource associated with global warming, as beef contributes to a staggering amount of global greenhouse gas emissions and water-footprints (Kallbekken & Sælen, 2013). As the plant-based food industry has seen tremendous growth, with retail sales growing by 11% from 2018 to 2019 bringing the market-value to 4.5 billion USD (PBFA, 2019), consumer demand for plant-based foods can be satisfied by pioneering partnerships with plant-based brands, increasing the range of vegan-friendly alternatives at the buffet. By altering the choice architecture through providing viable alternatives to red meat at the buffet and restricting beef to onboard restaurants, Carnival would nudge the reduction of beef consumption and waste by implementing default options which inform status-quo biases (Henkel, Seidler, Kranz & Fiedler, 2019). The suggested modifications to the physical environment and choice architecture would serve as a powerful means to trigger PEB, where nudging through the default effect is efficacious due to people's reliance on default heuristics pertaining to status-quo biases (Henkel et al., 2019). Setting the status-quo for PEB and thus moulding status-quo biases can be partially achieved in the material layer, though crucially, sustainability lies at the intersections of the material, social and embodied layers (Lahlou,

2017). A comprehensive plan which weaves interventions throughout the three dimensions can enable Carnival to maximise sustainable impact by scaffolding behaviour.

Recommendation Two: The Social Level

A key component to the social level of installation theory, the notion of ‘good citizenship’ through conformism and social norm compliance can be extended to the cruise industry through the introduction of sustainability forms. By distributing forms which transparently delineate environmental concerns that Carnival seeks to tackle at the company and guest-level, Carnival would be introducing an upstream intervention: a method employed to scaffold behaviour and generate desired actions through targeting social norms (Verplanken & Wood, 2006). Upstream interventions disrupt unwanted habits such as non-sustainable behaviours by triggering injunctive norms which are social in nature and illustrate what ought to be done by ascribing value judgements to behaviours (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Therefore, the widespread distribution of a compliance form would promote PEB by moulding social norms and thus scaffolding behaviour.

While the distribution of the sustainability form functions to target social norms, guest commitment and compliance is critical to generating impactful change. Publicly expressed commitment at the check-in phase is a mechanism to boost compliance (Baca-Motes, Brown, Gneezy, Keenan & Nelson, 2013) premised on the enhancement of the self-concept where individuals signal their self-ascribed traits and identity to themselves and others through explicitly committing to PEB (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). As humans have an inherent need to maintain harmony by aligning attitudes and beliefs (Festinger, 1962) which motivates consistent behaviour to bolster the self-concept, it can be predicted that form signage will promote compliance. Distributing specially designed water-bottles to guests who sign the form would further encourage compliance, serving as a signal of an injunctive norm and reminder to uphold a meaningful commitment (Baca-Motes et al., 2013). Furthermore, the water-bottle would serve as a visible marker of pro-sociality, relating to the social nature of conservation and the outward expression of an attractive self-image. Therefore, the water-bottle would satisfy socially oriented motives, functioning as a means to express conspicuous conservation which harnesses social status motives (Griskevicius, Tybur & Van den Bergh, 2010). The visibility of sustainability commitment through the water-bottles may generate peer comparison and social status competition, encouraging an influx of guests to commit to the sustainability efforts in order to enhance their self-image and signal pro-sociality (Schubert,

2017). Functioning as competitive altruism, status competition can be harnessed to promote PEB, where status relates to a hierarchy of rewards (Griskevicius et al., 2010). The introduction of a point-system for guest compliance would serve as a reward system, further incentivising guests to comply as incentives are a powerful tool to influence behaviour (Dolan, Hallsworth, Halpern, King, Metcalfe & Vlaev, 2012), where people are more likely to engage in PEB if they anticipate positive consequences for themselves (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007).

As hedonism is integral to leisure experiences (Duman & Mattila, 2005), utilising the goal-frame theory provides a means to implement interventions which carefully consider the balance between hedonic goals which relate to expedient and short-lived satisfaction, gain goals which pertain to resource acquisition, and normative goals which relate to injunctive norms by adhering to socially appropriate behaviour (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007). The introduction of the sustainability compliance form and point system made visible by the aesthetically ‘special’ water-bottle functions to satisfy the three-competing goal-frames, where the form relates to normative goals, the point system satisfies gain goals, and the aesthetics of the water-bottle and messages it signals fulfils hedonic goals. Therefore, interventions at the social level should generate PEB, complemented by interventions at the embodied level which address social representations and knowledge systems.

Recommendation Three: The Embodied Level

When identifying interventions aimed to target the material, social and embodied levels, the success rate of the interventions depends on audience reception. As tourists are primarily seeking experiences (Walker & Moscardo, 2014) and cruises are a quintessential embodiment of the entertainment business within the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), interventions aimed to target representations and knowledge systems can align the entertainment theme with the sustainability cues by introducing the entertainment-infused sustainability and voluntourism presentation. The presentation would affect knowledge systems by targeting normative goals through the discussion of environmental concerns and the delineation and instilment of smart norms pertaining to PEB. Crucially, the presentation will be presented through a fun, narrativized animation revolving around Shelly the Turtle, aiming to maximize impact on knowledge systems as “most of our experience, our knowledge, and our thinking is organized as stories” (Turner, 1996, p. V). Stories are a commonly used and effective tool to shape behaviour (Shaffer, Focella, Hathaway, Scherer & Zikmund-Fisher, 2018), where narratives are embedded in the experiential system (Epstein, Pacini, Denes-Raj

& Heier, 1996). Therefore, presenting information in a narrativized fashion using Shelly as a personable visual and symbolic representation of PEB would shape knowledge systems while adhering to the entertainment theme of the cruise experience.

A study conducted by Ahm, Kim and Aggarwal (2014) highlighted the effectiveness of anthropomorphism in generating prosocial behaviour, as people feel compelled to comply to messages ascribed with human qualities. The success rates for generating compliance were linked to guilt avoidance, as participants were driven to act pro-environmentally in order to curtail anticipatory guilt for harming an anthropomorphised entity (Ahn et al., 2014). Introducing and installing Shelly as an anthropomorphised representation of sustainable behaviour at sites for intervention and on water-bottles would therefore instil a symbolic representation of injunctive prosocial norms, driving compliance rates by having guests regularly engage with an anthropomorphised figure at both the material and embodied levels. Shelly's 'wink' feature would serve as an additional layer of anthropomorphism, as Shelly would be able to engage with guests and satisfy their hedonic goals by instantaneously recognising and rewarding compliance. The introduction of Shelly and her narrativized nature would therefore function to shape knowledge systems by instilling representations of the pro-environmental guest, both on and off-board.

At the presentation, Shelly's delivery of information pertaining to voluntourism opportunities and her emphasis on its benefits would make off-board sustainability values salient, affecting interpretive systems by activating the concept of the mindful visitor (Walker & Moscardo, 2014). Interaction and immersion lie at the heart of both voluntourism and experiential engagements (Walker & Moscardo, 2014) which may motivate guests to seek voluntourism opportunities that benefit key stakeholders, such as destination port communities and the environment as a whole. Expressing opportunities for guests to behave pro-environmentally both on and off-board through a friendly, anthropomorphised figure would simultaneously complement the experiential nature and theme of cruises, while benefiting a range of key stakeholders and reducing Carnival's ecological footprint.

Limitations

As Carnival is a popular mass-market experience brand catering to a wide array of demographics who converge over aesthetics of casualness and fun, great care must be taken to

situate the environmental interventions within Carnival's entertainment architecture, revolving around classlessness and unity (Kolberg, 2016). In order to offset the higher initial costs required to introduce the suggested interventions, it is imperative that guests comply to the efforts. Therefore, a challenge faced will be ensuring the interventions are positively received within a hedonic context, and adhere to the brand culture of inclusiveness. Underpinning the interventions are concepts such as status and anticipatory guilt, though crucially, cruisers do not want to pay to suffer from status anxiety (Berger, 2004). Consequentially, for Carnival to ensure that the interventions do not evoke negative feelings while meeting hedonic, gain and normative goals, the interventions must be presented in a friendly, non-pretentious manner while stressing equal access to the rewards systems. Though the initial costs may be considerable, successfully aligning the brand culture with the interventions to resonate well with the core demographics should boost compliance, benefitting Carnival economically as a result of waste reduction, and socially due to infusing environmentalism within the brand's 'experiencescape'.

Conclusion

The interventions suggested aim to embed PEB within Carnival's hedonic experience by scaffolding human behaviour at the material, social and embodied levels. The successful implementation of the interventions will have a powerful effect on the company's reputation, pioneering new means to achieve corporate social responsibility by engaging key stakeholders around the globe. As a result, Carnival can secure its dominance in the seascape, becoming the leading exemplar of sustainability within the cruise-ship industry to further promote environmental initiatives from competitors.

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