

WELLESLEY IN
BUSINESS
SYMPOSIUM

2025

WELLESLEY BUSINESS
CASE COMPETITION

FEATURING



Priya Paul '88



APEEJAY
SURRENDRA
PARK HOTELS





2025

WELLESLEY BUSINESS

CASE COMPETITION

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Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels | November 2025

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Decoding Gen Z: Travel Habits, Motivations, and Market Opportunities

Priya Paul knows her company must continue to improve in order to compete. She and her management team are preparing for the board meeting for her company, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels (ASPH), where she serves as Chairperson. ASPH owns and operates The Park Hotels brands, including The Park, The Park Collection, Zone by the Park, and Zone Connect by the Park. Paul's board is eager to hear her plans to continue the hotel chain's torrid growth. The company recently completed a successful IPO and it is critical they provide a clear and compelling vision for the future to maintain their momentum. The Indian tourism and hospitality market is finally emerging from the uncertainty of the pandemic years and growth is steady.

A comment from her recent board prep meeting stood out in Paul's mind. It came from Vijay Dewan, Managing Director for ASPH and the key leader at the company: ASPH believes it can do more to uniquely cater to the needs of Gen Z and boost its profile with younger travelers, but the question facing the board is — how can we do that most effectively? Paul had been wrestling with this question. She knows the answer could be key to her company's growth in an increasingly crowded Indian luxury travel market. As she reviews her notes from a busy day of management meetings in their corporate headquarters in downtown Kolkata, Paul wonders what ASPH needs to do to stay connected to this important segment of consumers.

The Economy, Demographics, and Hospitality Market

Paul and her team need to appeal to both domestic and international travelers in order to meet or exceed their goals. The Indian economy is currently the fourth largest in the world with GDP growth projected >6% for FY 2025-2026. Over half of the population is under 30 years old with an additional 100 million people joining that group by the year 2030. A rapidly growing middle class is a key driver associated with the consistent growth in domestic tourism. The population is tech-savvy with an increasingly AI-skilled workforce.

In the Indian hotel industry, supply is not keeping pace with demand. Growth is being driven by expansion beyond the "Tier 1 cities" in India, like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore. Current trends in the Indian hospitality market include sports tourism, pop culture-inspired tourism, cruise tourism, non-traditional hospitality companies, and "tea tourism."

Paul's management team has identified some global Gen Z travel and hospitality preferences that present unique challenges and opportunities. Gen Z travels are experiential and value driven. They are more conscious of sustainability and responsible tourism. They rely heavily on social media and digital influencers when making travel decisions. They also pursue unique and immersive travel experiences.

ASPH and The Park Brands Today

ASPH continues to lead the way for luxury boutique hotels in India. With 35 hotels across four brands in 26 cities, and 31 new hotels under development, the hotel group will soon have approximately 5,400 rooms in their portfolio.

A primary driver of their success has been a commitment to being “Anything but Ordinary.” As a company they remain focused on infusing their hotels and hotel experiences with creative and “global / local” inspiration. When considering expansion or renovation opportunities, the management team is always considering their Seven Brand Spirits: Urbane India, Curating Culture, Food Reimagined, 360 Design, Stay Well, Life: Leisure, and Ready, Set, Business.

In each of its hotels, ASPH features India’s most famous night clubs and bars. These clubs and bars provide innovation and trend-setting events appealing to millennials and Gen Z. Recent events at ASPH properties include Catch the Labubu, Fake Weddings, Coffee & Matcha Rave, Bollywood, and Afro Music Nights.

Digital Marketing and Technology Initiatives

The digital marketing team at ASPH promotes the brand through three main channels: global distribution systems (GDS) promotion, affiliates, and the Google Metasearch Platform. GDS promotion delivers the strongest return on ad spend. GDS platforms are databases that store details on hotels and travel agents use these platforms to source recommendations for their clients. Hotels will market themselves to travel agents on these platforms, leveraging keywords that relate to rates and pricing, including the words “discount” or “promotion,” and portraying a high-quality and appealing offer for travel agents that includes commission and other benefits.

ASPH engages in affiliate marketing to reach a broader audience via the affiliate’s established trust and followers. They pay commissions to the affiliates when a booking is made, which lowers marketing risk.

The company also uses Google Metasearch to display and track real-time pricing, availability, and booking links to users searching for hotels on Google Search and Maps. A snapshot of Google Metasearch data monitored by the ASPH Digital Marketing team is provided (Exhibit 1). The digital marketing team is consistently reviewing their spend across these channels.

Exhibit 1: ASPH - Google Metasearch Report

Campaign Statistics					Production			Performance		
Channel	Impr.	Clicks	CTR	Spend %	Revenue \$	Bookings	Net Revenue \$	CNVR	RPB \$	ROAS
PPC	63,460	3,333	5.3%	62%	39,886	15	39,435	0.5%	2,659	88.3
Social	529,264	3,944	0.7%	25%	811	3	626	0.1%	270	4.4
Display	9,942	48	0.5%	12%	194	1	107	2.1%	194	2.2
Total	602,666	7,325	1.2%	100%	40,891	19	40,168	0.3%	2,152	56.5

ASPH's digital marketing team has a 2025-26 budget of \$330,000 USD. They plan to spend a third of that budget on GDS marketing.

ASPH is also investing in technology to improve customer experience. They are deploying AI tools to create personalized offers that a guest is most likely to say yes to, including room upgrades, attributes, amenities, merchandise, and services. Engage guests during pre-arrival, way to hotel using mobile check-in, or at the front desk, all while generating incremental revenue to boost Revenue Per Available Room (known in the hospitality industry as 'RevPAR'). They are investing in enhancements to their web and mobile check-in capability to allow guests to check in from anywhere before their arrival, reducing wait times and streamlining the experience.

Paul will soon receive a demo of a new AI-powered bot on their main website to enhance guest experience and boost direct bookings. The team believes the bot will help increase direct bookings, and freeing staff from repetitive tasks to focus on more complex issues.

Lastly, they are investigating an AI-powered loyalty system for their restaurants and bars that will support growth through customer data, smart campaigns, and loyalty tools. It will be a customized loyalty program for the brand, which can be point-based, visit-based, or cash-back program – tailored to the business needs. The system will also measure key metrics such as revenue growth, redemption rates, top customers, rewards redeemed, total customer enrolments, and more. It will also enable the performance of automated customer communication and CRM.

ASPH's 2025-26 technology budget is \$2.4 million USD. They plan to spend two thirds of that budget on CapEx projects.

The ASPH Challenge

ASPH aims to achieve 15–19% growth (higher than the 7–9% growth targets projected for the Indian industry). In order to achieve these ambitious goals, Paul and her management team are eager to collect fresh perspectives on Gen Z travelers and how ASPH can earn their business. They will be presenting their strategy for the upcoming year to the Board of Directors, including their plan to better serve Gen Z travelers. They need to decide how best to invest their limited resources to achieve their goals.

Develop a set of recommendations for how ASPH can better serve Gen Z travels. Please include information about Gen Z travelers, including global trends, demographics, and other information you feel would provide helpful context for Paul and her management team.

- Summarize ASPH's business strategy and their competitive advantages
- Analyze the benefits, risks, and opportunities related to serving the Gen Z hospitality market.
- Can Gen Z travelers contribute to the company's ambitious growth goals?
- With a portfolio of nearly 70 hotels, all purposefully designed to be unique, how can ASPH build brand awareness with Gen Z travelers? Consider the marketing channels they are using today and how they might position themselves relative to their competition.
- Should ASPH invest more heavily in marketing to build awareness, or technology to improve consumer experience and retention? How can ASPH innovate in these spaces?

Instructions for Recommendation and Presentation

- Teams are permitted to use research beyond the materials provided
 - The following should be included in all Presentation Slides:
 - Title slide, including names and class years of all Team Members and Alumnae Mentors
 - Executive Summary slide
 - Overview of Gen Z travel and hospitality trends and emerging preferences
 - Detailed explanation of each recommendation, including relevant analyses
 - Oral presentations will be no longer than 8 minutes
 - All presentations in the preliminary round will be followed by 7 minutes of Q&A and feedback from a panel of judges
 - All Team Members should contribute equally to the oral presentation
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Team and Mentor Assignments

Team 1

STUDENTS:

Annie Yang '28
Diana Zhang '28
Jasmine Sun '28
Panny Pan '28

MENTORS:

Deborah Wahl '86
Shelley Hartman '86

Team 2

STUDENTS:

Gigi Chen '28
Helen Peng '28
Nadine Gibson '28
Rori Li '28

MENTORS:

Peggy Czyzak-Dannenbaum '69
Colleen Richards Powell '95

Team 3

STUDENTS:

Celena Wang '28
Cindy Jia '28
Katy Guo '28
Scarlett Xi '28

MENTOR:

Annie Rosen '03

Team 4

STUDENTS:

Berenice Lopez '26
Dalice Rodriguez '26
Elisabeth Sylvestre '26
Yunedy Paredes '26

MENTORS:

Leigh Marriner '72
Theresa Tribble '01

Team 5

STUDENTS:

Amaris Garza '27
Emily Fang '27
Isabel Cheng '27
Saanvi Rungta '26

MENTOR:

Eileen Conroy '75

Team 6

STUDENTS:

Aileen Liang '28
Neysa Shivdasani '28
Raga Donthireddy '28
Victoria Huang '28

MENTOR:

Roberta Sydney '80

Team 7

STUDENTS:

Arianna Brown '26
Hanna Kurdziel '26
Leah Butler '26
Maryam Zad '26

MENTOR:

Janet Anderson '83

Team 8

STUDENTS:

Maelle Pierre '27
Ozioma Odocha '26
Sinmiloluwa Akande '28
Tiffany Qian '27

MENTOR:

Laura Sparks '97

Team 9

STUDENTS:

Audrey Richardson '26
Lily Mosisa '28
Neneh Hambræus '28
Zoe Puertas '26

MENTOR:

Denise Brosseau '82

Team 10

STUDENTS:

Amber Moosa '28
Audrey Chang '28
Proud Techarungchaikul '28
Vivian Yang '28

MENTOR:

Rhonda Berger '82

Team 11

STUDENTS:

Annie Chen '27
Diana Tsang '28
Ishika Reddy '28
Coco Zhang '28

MENTOR:

Stephanie Georges '85

Team 12

STUDENTS:

Elizabeth Kim '26
Janina Shivdasani '26
Julia Kuang '26
Lily Deutscher '27

MENTOR:

Marilyn T. Smith '70

Team 13

STUDENTS:

Harshika Jaiswal '28
Kylan Yang '26
Megha Rao '28

MENTOR:

Jocelyn Houle '90

PRELIMINARY ROUND SCORESHEET

Judge’s Name: _____ (please print)

Team # or Name: _____ (please print)

DIRECTIONS: Using the scoring criteria below, circle whole numbers only.
Copy that number into the box on the right. Lines left blank will be counted as a 1.

CRITICAL ISSUES: The team clearly and appropriately identified the critical issues raised by the case.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Score
Strongly Disagree				Average				Strongly Agree		

RECOMMENDATIONS: The recommendations clearly addressed the critical issues. Recommendations were feasible, creative, and appropriate to the audience.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Score
Strongly Disagree				Average				Strongly Agree		

Q&A: Answers during the Q&A portion were clear, thoughtful, and relevant. More than one teammate responded appropriately and with confidence.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Score
Strongly Disagree				Average				Strongly Agree		

DELIVERY: The team delivered the presentation persuasively and professionally; the team projected unity; slides were attractive and easy to understand.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Score
Strongly Disagree				Average				Strongly Agree		

OVERALL IMPRESSION: The team gave a credible, persuasive, and professional presentation.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Score
Strongly Disagree				Average				Strongly Agree		

DIRECTIONS: Add the points and write the total to the right.

Total Score	
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COMMENTS: Please provide comments so students can learn from your feedback. What worked well?
What could have been improved?



