

The Sustainable Hotel Handbook

*With practical insights, tools and resources
for you and your team*



People

Your handbook for creating a hotel that puts People first.

MAp

THE SUSTAINABLE HOTEL

#03

March 2026

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People
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*For everyone on the journey
to making this Planet a more purposeful
and hospitable place.*



FOREWORD

Pursuing the path to sustainability – together

Welcome to The Sustainable Hotel – and thank you for joining us on the journey to a better future!

We carefully and passionately crafted *The Sustainable Hotel Handbook: People* in order to MApp out the way for hoteliers to develop more sustainable hotels. Sustainable hotels that make a positive impact on People and Planet, while delivering sustainable success for you. Whether you've long been on the path to sustainability or are just starting out, this handbook is intended to empower you and get you going in the right direction.

Before we begin, we'd like to introduce ourselves. We are MApp, a creative-led hotel branding and marketing consultancy. We turn Purpose into performance, creating sustainable hotels and standout brands that do good, look good and sell well. As a Certified B Corporation based in Zurich, we work internationally, MApping out a better future for hotels, People and Planet.

Through our experience, we know that hoteliers such as yourself have the power to create real impact in this world and leave it better off for future generations. But we also know that sustainability can be daunting – especially when it comes to hospitality. With so much information out there, where do you start? With such a complex topic, what's the correct route for

your hotel? With so much marketing noise, how do you avoid the trap of greenwashing?

In this handbook, we outline how to make your hotel's People your hotel's priority. To help you define who those People are and how you can support, uplift and empower them, we've filled this handbook with practical guidance, tools and resources. If you haven't done so already, we recommend reading the separate Introduction handbook in order to get better acquainted with the handbook structure and important elements that will guide you to action.

As we embark on this journey together, it's important to always remember that, when it comes to sustainability, you should strive for progress not perfection. Achieving 100% sustainability, while an admirable goal, is simply not realistic and as the needs of our world change, the way we tackle those needs changes, too. What's most important is that you simply start the journey, and continue to learn, grow and improve along the way.

"Progress not perfection" was our guiding mantra when creating this handbook, knowing that it will never be perfect or finished. We knew it was needed for the hospitality industry, and we approached it with the goal to serve and empower hoteliers as well as do

our part for People and Planet. We too will continue to provide updated guidance and tackle new challenges and critical topics for the betterment of the industry and the world. That's our commitment.

It is our hope that you too will approach this journey with a deep commitment to learning, serving and making a real difference now and in the future.

Once again, thank you for joining us on the journey to impact! Let's build a more hospitable and purposeful Planet – together.

**#onwards
Your MApp team**



VISIT THE SUSTAINABLE HOTEL NOW

P.S.: We'd love to hear from you along the way! Please feel free to share your feedback, insights and comments with us at onwards@MApp-consultancy.com.

3.

PEOPLE



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*“Be good to people.
And don’t forget that
you are people too.”*

COLIN WRIGHT (2013).

Author of the book
“My Exile Lifestyle”



3.1.

INTRODUCTION *to People*



**OUR EQUATION FOR
SUCCESS IS:
PURPOSE + PEOPLE =
PROFIT.**

It's time to tackle social sustainability. And by that, we mean your People.

In this handbook, we take a close look at how your hotel impacts People – directly or indirectly. And we outline ways in which you can manage your impact in a proactive way to ensure that the impact you have is a positive one, not a negative one.

Before we start, though, let's agree that hospitality, and in your case, in planning or running a hotel, is a real People business. A business from the People for the People. And therefore, it's only right that you do right by them. That's why social sustainability is a critical part of your hotel, as it affects the quality of your relationships with your stakeholders: by proactively creating a positive impact you

demonstrate how much you value those relationships. And what does that give you in return? More Profit.

At MAp, our equation for success is as follows: Purpose + People = Profit. In other words, with a strong Purpose in place and with your People prioritised, you'll create Profit for the long-term. That's because it's your People (who identify with your Purpose) who determine your hotel's ultimate success. After all, all money you earn comes directly from People, right?

So let's set off on this handbook, where we'll MAp out the way to a more socially-sustainable future – for ALL People, and of course, for your hotel too.

DEFINITION

People Mapped out

“You can have everything in life you want, if you will just help enough other people get what they want.”

ZIG ZIGLAR (2000).

Author and motivational speaker

The social dimension of sustainability deals with the impact your hotel has on the society for which and in which it operates. It's about being a good host, a helpful neighbour, a quality employer and partner, a responsible and reliable brand – while serving the direct and indirect needs of your stakeholders.

And who are those stakeholders? While there are many stakeholder groups involved in making a hotel project a success, in this handbook we'll focus on four key groups that your hotel has a major impact on:

- Your guests
- Your employees
- Your partners
- Your local community

Unfortunately, the hospitality and tourism industry has not always had a good reputation when it comes to its social impact: from exploitative labour practices (especially for migrant workers) to local People losing out on the economic benefits of tourism in their destination, to unsafe working conditions, to quality concerns within the supply chain, etc. The list goes on.

On a bright note, as the industry touches every human on earth in one way or the other, there is so much opportunity to positively contribute to the lives of your guests, your employees and partners, and your local community – now and in the future! And in this handbook, we'll show you how.

FACTS + FIGURES

The power of People

Hospitality and tourism is a People-centred and People-driven industry. And it's a giant industry.

To understand just how big it really is, it's important to get a sense for its scale and account for how many People it touches across the world. Let's put it into perspective by looking at some impressive numbers below.

The World Travel & Tourism Council (2021) published the following numbers in its annual Economic Impact Report. In 2019, prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, travel & tourism (including its direct, indirect and induced impacts) accounted for:

- 1 in 4 of all new jobs created across the world
- 10.6% of all jobs (334 million)
- 10.4% of global GDP (USD 9.2 trillion)

We all know that after 2019, the industry took a huge hit, with numbers declining rapidly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it experienced a significant loss of jobs, with women, youth and minorities disproportionately impacted by this decrease.

That said, the numbers clearly show – and continue to show – just how important the hospitality and tourism industry is. With the industry and economy in the state that it is in now, it's more imperative than ever to improve and uplift the lives of those negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Something we are strongly convinced of at MAP: we can turn hospitality and tourism into a force for good if we all take small steps towards a more sustainable future.

With a predicted recovery over the next years, a growing demand for travel and an increasingly interconnected world, the industry and its reach and influence will continue to grow.



WE CAN TURN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INTO A FORCE FOR GOOD IF WE ALL TAKE SMALL STEPS TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.