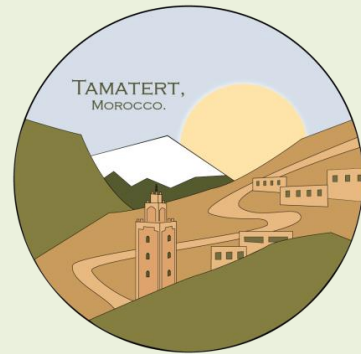




**CREATING A
COHESIVE BRAND
IDENTITY FOR
TAMATERT,
MOROCCO**



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Creating a Cohesive Brand Identity for Tamatert, Morocco

An Interactive Qualifying Project

Submitted to:

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ABSTRACT

In Morocco, the pandemic significantly affected the tourism industry. Morocco banned international travel for extended periods of time from 2020 through 2022, which presented a new opportunity for rural tourism within the country. Located in the High Atlas region of Morocco, the village of Tamatert is home to five auberges that provides travelers with a place to stay near Mt. Toubkal. Our team created a cohesive brand identity for the village to help increase local traffic to the area. We interviewed inn managers/owners, conducted participant observation, collected survey data from local tourists, and visual data to inform the creation of a logo, tagline, and functioning landing page.

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Our team would like to thank the individuals who were willing to provide their time, effort, and expertise to support the completion of this project. First, we would like to thank our sponsor, Professor Zineb Rhajbal, at Mohammed V University. This project would not have been possible without her insight and personal connection to the village of Tamatert.

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Finally, we want to express our deepest gratitude to the people of Tamatert, especially the wonderful inn owners and managers who extended their hospitality to us during our stay. Their insight about the village and the pride they take in their inns is inspiring. We hope that our work contributes to their inn's identities and is a source of pride for the village of Tamatert.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the world in terms of economic and social structures. Worldwide closures forced many businesses to shut down resulting in a loss of vital income. Moroccan border closures negatively affected the country's tourism industry, with an estimated drop of 100,000 visitors in March 2020 alone (WHO). This presents a new opportunity for travel within the country, and a vital need to improve rural tourism marketing and branding strategies.

TOURISM IN MOROCCO

The Moroccan government has consistently demonstrated that the tourism industry is a key pillar of their economy and has continuously provided plenty of resources for the sector to prosper in the long run. Due to this prioritization, tourist arrivals increased by 7.6% each year from 2012 to 2019. This steady increase in tourist arrivals was followed by a sharp 79% decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Ministry of Tourism, 2021).

The government has largely supported growth of inbound tourism to the Kingdom through foreign and national policy. For example, by opening its airspace to the European Union (EU) and implementing the Vision 2010 and Vision 2020 initiatives, Morocco has improved its

Figure 1

Foreign Tourist in Casablanca



standing as an international travel destination. The Vision initiatives sought to address rural tourism as one of its areas of development. Rural tourism refers to the process of experiencing rural landscapes and embracing cultural traditions in local establishments (Juganaru et al., 2008). The lack of a cohesive identity for rural destinations in Morocco limits their ability to grow. “[O]ften lack[ing] market access, know-how, and financial resources,” small

businesses situated in rural environments struggle to compete against the established cultural attractions of Fez and Casablanca. There is more that can be done to help differentiate rural destinations in Morocco. (Kagermeier **Figure 2** et al., 2019).

Man at the Summit Mount Toubkal

The geography of Morocco provides a range of diverse landscapes; from the rich basins of the Middle-Atlas to the grand mountains of the High-Atlas there is much tradition, culture, and nature to explore. The mountains of the High Atlas are an especially relevant rural travel destination. Located within this region



is Mount Toubkal, the highest peak in North Africa, which is a popular hiking destination. Despite the popularity of trekking in the area, smaller, hospitable villages have struggled to market themselves as a unique travel destination.

RURAL TOURISM AND DESTINATION BRANDING

An essential part of marketing is branding. In order to develop a successful brand, it is critical to understand how the market, product, company, or service can make an impact on its customers. Destination branding can be useful to promote rural tourism. This form of branding particularly focuses on how to increase tourism to a particular area. These destinations must create a unique image of themselves to succeed. Rural tourism is typically less costly and helps support small businesses. The tourism market is subject to external change due to factors such as political unrest, economic crises, and natural disasters. Due to this, it is important to employ effective marketing and branding strategies to promote this kind of destination.

PROJECT INSPIRATION

Dr. Zineb Rhajbal is a professor of marketing at Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco. In early 2021, Zineb traveled to the village of Tamatert, Imlil, Morocco as a local tourist and has returned multiple times since. From personal observations and communications

Figure 3

Professor Zineb Rhajbal in Tamatert with Local Children



during her stay, she realized many tourists overlooked the village of Tamatert despite the high-quality services and affordable prices. Zineb inspired this project from the tourist perspective, hoping to increase rural tourism to the village. Since traveling to Tamatert, the team worked to create a cohesive brand identity seen through both the tourist and local lenses.

TAMATERT, IMLIL, MOROCCO

Tamatert, Imlil is home to seven different families and five auberges (Personal Communication). Situated in the mountains of the High Atlas and roughly 43 miles outside the city of Marrakech (Google, n.d.), the village of Tamatert and its inns offer various attractions. One of the most popular appeals is hiking the Atlas Mountains, including Mt. Toubkal. There are hiking tours offered around the area, or one could undertake the adventure individually. The inns also provide great views of the landscapes for those who may be interested in photography or videography. The auberges displayed their hospitality with homemade tea prepared daily.

Figure 4

Tamatert, Imlil Situated in the Atlas Mountains



They open their kitchen to host cooking classes to understand and perfect local cuisine. Despite having great attractions and amenities, the inns in Tamatert continue to struggle due to pandemic travel restrictions and online booking commissions.

METHODS

The goal of this project was to help increase rural tourism in the Tamatert area. We produced the following objectives to accomplish this goal.

1. Identify the motivations and booking habits of Moroccan tourists, including those who have traveled to Tamatert.
2. Develop a brand identity for Tamatert.
3. Create a functional landing page prototype to model direct booking opportunities and further market Tamatert as a tourist destination.

We used a design thinking process as a basis for our methodology, analysis, and subsequent deliverable designs. Below we provide a description of each stage and how we completed it.

- **Empathize:** Gain an empathetic understanding of the problem by building a genuine connection and engagement with the target audience.
 - We collected data by surveying Moroccan tourists, interviewing inn managers, conducting participant observation/autoethnography, and capturing images and videos.
- **Define:** Analyze findings to compose a problem statement in a human-centered manner, such that the “problem” is understood as an opportunity for improvement.
 - We analyzed our data through quantitative methods as well as emergent thematic coding.
- **Ideate:** Think outside the box to explore innovative solutions that support the defined opportunity.
 - We used our codes and other findings from the *define* stage, to brainstorm proper deliverables and elements of each.

-
- **Prototype:** Select the most useful ideas and create tangible models of the product with a user-centric mindset.
 - We made logo, tagline, and landing page prototypes using the brainstormed content.
 - **Test:** Run user testing sessions to observe how users interact with the prototypes and gather valuable feedback on the proposed solutions (Dam, n.d.).
 - We designed and distributed a logo testing survey.

Each step served an important role in successfully completing our three objectives and guided the designs for our ultimate deliverables. We created further recommendations for the future development and utilization of the brand identity and landing page.

EMPATHIZE

As mentioned, in order to understand the project opportunity, we first needed to learn what brings tourists to Tamatert or Imlil to begin with. This stage led us to traveling to Tamatert and understanding stakeholder perspectives through our surveys, interviews with inn owners, participant observation/autoethnography, and visual data collection.

DEFINE

We analyzed our data for key themes and made findings as part of the *define* stage. We compiled themes from tourist surveys, inn interviews, and participant observation/autoethnography below. Images from our visual data collection are also included.

Imlil Area Provides an Escape from Densely Populated Regions

The majority of respondents were from the Casablanca-Settat region, and the second most common region was Rabat-Salé-Kénitra. These two locations are busier, more densely populated areas, suggesting that those traveling to Imlil are looking to temporarily escape the urban lifestyle. Additional results showed that most respondents were traveling to Imlil for vacation. The usage of the term “vacation” further exemplifies how those visiting are trying to take a break from their busy lives.

Trust is Important in Booking Travel

The survey results showed that 88% of respondents have traveled to Imlil more than once, indicating the desire for tourists to return and re-experience the natural landscape that the Imlil area has to offer. Of these respondents, some of the tourists booked their stay through travel agencies, while others contacted the owners directly or used connections in the area. The inn managers receive many of their customers through word of mouth as opposed to online booking methods. Tourists who heard about the area could reach out through mutual contacts and negotiate prices and details of their stay. Ultimately, these results showed that tourists preferred methods that allowed the logistics to be taken care of by someone else. In other words, travelers have to be able to trust an agency or inn manager to handle the details of their stay.

Tourists Seek Varying Accommodations

The town of Imlil is located directly in the Atlas Mountains and provides a great starting point to hike Mt. Toubkal. Survey data showed that this was a major motivation for tourists to stay in the area. As part of escaping the city life, they would retreat to the mountains and hike. Some tourists did not specifically look at the differences between the villages in Imlil, they were just looking for a place to stay while they tackled the two-day Mt. Toubkal hike. As long as the place they were staying would help them plan activities and offer a basic place to sleep, they were content.

Inns Value Amenities, Hospitality, and Tradition

Another important aspect of this project was to empathize not only with tourists but the inn managers as well. Inn managers expressed that they were proud of providing services to their customers, which is a major way to maintain customer loyalty. These interviewees were also proud of their location, and that they could accommodate those who wanted to explore but also those who wanted to stay in and enjoy the views. The infrastructure of Tamatert was nothing if not traditional, and each inn had its own unique presence.

Tamatert as a Relaxing Getaway

The consensus through interviews, surveys, and participant observation is that Tamatert is a perfect getaway. While Tamatert has a lot of appealing aspects, we did not find marketable features that differentiate the village from the others nearby. This finding influenced how we defined our project opportunities, especially leading into the *ideate* stage of the design process. After realizing Tamatert needed further assistance establishing itself as a unique destination, our group needed to find effective solutions to this problem that did not take away from what Tamatert had to offer, but rather enhanced it.

IDEATE

After collecting and analyzing the qualitative data, we began the *ideate* stage. This includes the brainstormed ideas for our deliverables. In the first step we identified key physical aspects of Tamatert to include in a logo, and then we matched specific colors from the images

Figure 5

View from Balcony of Auberge Atlas Tamatert



Figure 6

Walking Along the Road to Tamatert



taken. We generated various saturations from the color codes to incorporate in the logos, the landing page, and other branding materials. Then, came the process of suggesting relevant content for the landing page.

PROTOTYPE

From our ideas, we created prototypes of the logo and landing page.

TEST

After reviewing the results from the test survey, the chosen logo elicited an emotional connection from respondents. The logo and accompanying tagline make both tourists and those from the Tamatert area feel calm and welcomed. Survey respondents deemed the final logo most aesthetically pleasing.

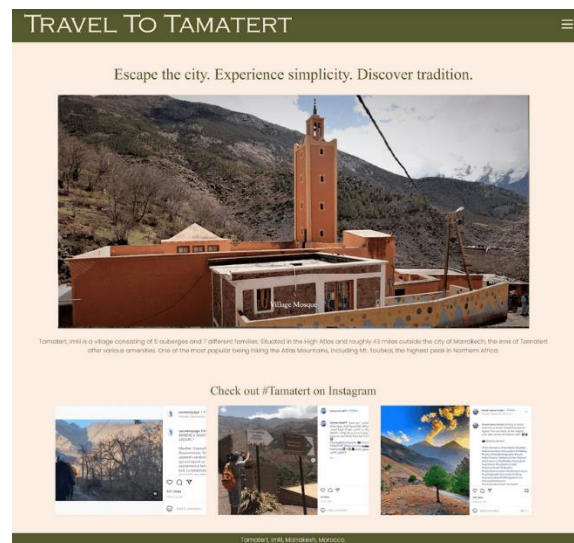
DELIVERABLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the conclusion of this project, our team presented Dr. Zineb Rhajbal a proposed brand identity for the village of Tamatert, summarized in a comprehensive branding booklet. As part of our implementation of the brand identity, we also created a landing page prototype with example pages seen in Figure 7. Our deliverables successfully completed the *prototype* and *test* stages of our five-step design process.

The branding booklet includes a list of components that should be implemented into the landing page platform to best cater to the inn owners and bring in more tourists. It includes a suggested logo for Tamatert as seen in Figure 8 and a proposed tagline for the village: Escape the city. Experience simplicity. Discover tradition.

Figure 7

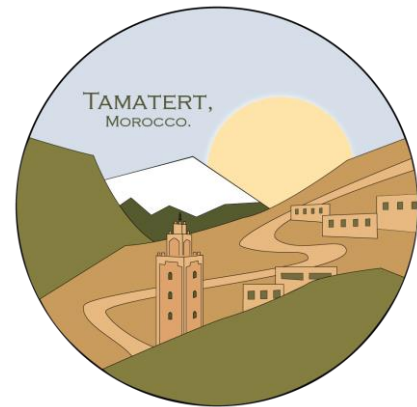
Home Page of the Landing Page Prototype



Lastly, Dr. Rhajbal received our final presentation and written report, that includes detailed explanations of our findings and deliverables. This will ensure that the project has increased potential to be continued in the future.

We also created recommendations for the village of Tamatert based on our findings and subsequent analysis. The recommendations include brand identity suggestions as well as additional proposed aspects for the landing page. By implementing our deliverables and considering our recommendations, we hope Tamatert can improve its brand identity and outreach to potential customers.

Figure 8
Final Logo Design



BRAND IDENTITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Use the Tamatert branding booklet designs** to expand the usage of the recommended logo and tagline.
2. **Create a unified social media presence** to maintain user engagement for Tamatert and promote the cohesive brand.
3. **Utilize event marketing** that allows the village to showcase its origins and culture, while also bringing people together.

LANDING PAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Embed social media posts** from the unified social media pages to showcase the village.
2. **Incorporate direct contact with inn managers** using a WhatsApp chat function, so customers and inn management can establish trust.
3. **Utilize blog-style reviews** where potential tourists can see feedback from previous visitors to Tamatert.
4. **Include Google search terms** on the page to ensure the website appears on related searches.

CONCLUSION

Our project aimed at creating a cohesive brand identity. This includes a booklet that provides a breakdown of crucial branding components, as well as a functional landing page prototype. Additionally, we have offered several recommendations on how the village of Tamatert could potentially increase rural tourism. Our data analysis of survey results, interviews with the inn managers, and autoethnography informed our deliverables. Our hope is to preserve the traditional aspects of Tamatert in accordance with what the locals are most proud of.

The pandemic significantly affected the tourism industry in Morocco. While international travel restrictions begin to relax, there are still several barriers to travel such as mandatory vaccination, COVID-19 testing, and possible quarantine mandates. Restrictions affect Morocco's tourism industry but also present an opportunity to better understand the role of rural travel within the country. The work we did in this project can both help the village of Tamatert and be a framework for branding plans in other rural areas of Morocco.

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2.3: Tourism in Morocco	MT, KH, OA, GA	All
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the tourism industry across the world. Due to worldwide border closures and emergency lockdowns, many small businesses were unable to make a sustainable income. In the case of Morocco, the number of tourists arriving in the country dropped drastically by an estimated 100,000 visitors in March 2020 alone (WHO). The decrease in tourists was especially difficult for the country, as a large portion of its economy relies on foreign tourism. Business owners linked to the tourism sector had to shut down with very little economic compensation. There were several barriers for international tourists to travel to Morocco; thus, many of these businesses were looking to implement new marketing strategies to promote local tourism.

Moroccans and foreign tourists gather in the auberges of Tamatert, a small village in the High Atlas region of Morocco. There are five inns in Tamatert: Les Jardins de l'Atlas, Hiba Lodge, Douar Samra, Kasbah Imlil, and Atlas Tamatert (Personal Communication). Situated in the High Atlas region, the village is a two-day hike from the peak of Mount Toubkal. As the highest summit in North Africa, it serves as a popular hiking destination where people can rent equipment and go on guided hikes. The inns struggled to recover from the severe drop in tourists due to the pandemic. This was compounded by online booking platforms (e.g., booking.com) that take away an estimated 15-20% of revenue, (Personal Communication). Thus, Tamatert needs a way to attract more local tourists to the village to combat both the loss in international tourists due to the pandemic and substantial online booking fees.

This leads to our project goal which was to help increase local tourism in the Tamatert area. The objectives of our project are as follows:

1. Identify the motivations and booking habits of Moroccan tourists, including those who have traveled to Tamatert.
2. Develop a brand identity for Tamatert.
3. Create a functional landing page prototype to model direct booking opportunities and further market Tamatert as a tourist destination.

Although the pandemic will eventually come to an end, the consequences of its economic disruption will likely have a lasting effect on the tourism industry in Morocco for the foreseeable future. In this paper, we provided the background on the pandemic, its impacts on Morocco, and marketing techniques specific to rural businesses. Then, we explain the methods used to accomplish our objectives by utilizing the Design Process framework. Finally, we provide our project findings, deliverables, and recommendations.

2.0 BACKGROUND

This chapter provides the necessary background to understand the impact of the COVID pandemic on rural tourism in Morocco and the need for our project. We first discuss the effects of the pandemic as it relates to the human, social, and economic ramifications on society. Next, we examine the impact of the pandemic specifically on the Kingdom of Morocco. We then explain the significance of the tourism industry in Morocco. Finally, we will introduce marketing aspects of branding small businesses as we work towards the goal of increasing rural tourism in Tamatert, Morocco.

2.1 THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic had, and continues to have, sudden and detrimental effects globally. The precise cost of the crisis is still uncertain, but the impacts are tangible. Since December of 2019, the virus has swept across the world, completely disrupting society as we knew it. The pandemic's effects can be broken down into three main categories: human, social, and economic.

Human effects include anything from physical, emotional, to psychological damage from the pandemic. Social distancing and government lockdowns quickly led to isolation. The immediate negative health effects of COVID-19 were unpredictable; some people felt the common cold, some lost their sense of taste and smell, while others lost their lives to the virus. Studies show that those who contracted COVID-19 would suffer long-term health problems in the lungs and brain (Del Rio et al., 2020). Months of social isolation caused a divide in many physical human relationships; those living apart were more disconnected than ever, while some people became closer than ever being at home all the time. Some relationships grew stronger and many faded as a consequence of physical separation. Besides overall physical well-being, many had to deal with the loneliness of isolation for the first time in their lives, which additionally correlated with an increase in externalized disorders and mental health problems (Chadi et al., 2022).

While government lockdown orders sought to address the spread of COVID-19, they also created additional crises. In their book, Benotti and Zech describe how community relationships eroded due to the drastic reduction of physical face-to-face interactions, “government measures related to social distancing rules, stay-at-home orders, business lockdowns, and curfews have in many cases eroded community relationships by drastically reducing opportunities for physical face-to-face interaction” (2021). Turmoil over masks, treatment, distancing, and general attitude towards the 2019 novel coronavirus shed light on the racial, political, and economic differences in society. Public health expert Lisa Bowleg claims, “COVID-19 reveals disproportionate risk and impact based on structured inequality at intersections of racial/ethnic minority status and class, as well as occupation” (2020). Because the virus shut countries down, certain populations, especially those of lower economic status, were more adversely affected. Many minority groups endured the pandemic without having proper medical insurance. The effects on specific subsections of the population vary, including how countries dealt with the situation; some areas are bouncing back, and others are collapsing.

The economic effects of the pandemic were comparable to some of the worst global recessions since World War II. Millions of workers lost their jobs and the United States’ “real GDP [was] plunging by about 33% by the end of the second quarter of 2020 and the unemployment rate reaching 14.7% in April 2020” (Carter et al., 2022). Such a dramatic drop in the economy suggests that the pandemic managed to harm the market value of firms across the country. Travel restrictions, stay-at-home orders, and general fear related to COVID-19 led to significant declines in revenue and profitability (Carter et al., 2022). The economy shut down on a global level, leaving many without a source of income. As the global pandemic hit, many countries were forced to enter a state of emergency. The human, social, and economic impacts experienced worldwide will now be further examined in the case of Morocco.

2.2 IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON MOROCCO

The pandemic greatly affected the Kingdom of Morocco. As experienced globally, there has been illness and loss of life in the country. Since March 2020, Morocco reported over 1,120,000 positive cases and 15,270 deaths (Reuters, 2022). To control this epidemiological situation, barriers to travel were put in place. From the beginning of the pandemic in early 2020

to January 2022, the Kingdom enforced some type of national lockdown measure. The Moroccan government put a state of emergency into place through May 2020 where failure to adhere resulted in months-long imprisonment or fines. They banned arrivals from all regions for several months after March 2020. The Kingdom even restricted domestic travel as people were ordered to remain at home. Schools, mosques, restaurants, and non-essential businesses were shut down for several months as well (OECDa, 2020). Even after these initial closures, Morocco cycled between banning and quarantining visitors from some or all regions, as seen in Figure 7 (Reuters, 2022). The number of arriving visitors to Morocco dropped by 100,000 in March 2020 alone. In addition to lockdown measures from 2020 to 2022, the World Health Organization (WHO) discouraged travel among many demographics including the elderly and those with comorbidities (World Health Organization, 2021). This recommendation acts as yet another barrier to travel, both domestically and globally.

The timeline in Figure 9 shows the chronological events resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in Morocco. At its onset, The Moroccan government suspended international and domestic flights, called a state of emergency, and enforced mandatory confinement with the threat of arrest. Lockdowns were extended through the spring of 2020 until deconfinement practices began in June. Due to COVID-19 variants, different phases of restrictions followed including regional travel bans and quarantining of arrivals. Moroccan borders closed in November 2021 to limit transmission of the Omicron variant. In February 2022 borders opened again (Reuters, 2022).

Figure 9

Morocco COVID Pandemic Timeline



Morocco's economy and the financial situations of their citizens were hurt by these closures and restrictions. As previously mentioned, non-essential shops were forced to shut down, and initial lockdowns caused 57% of businesses to suspend operations, 72% of which were small-scale businesses. Many establishments, especially micro-sized businesses, could not survive this period and were forced to shut down permanently or terminate employees to keep afloat. Unemployment in the nation rose from 9.1% to 13% from 2019 to 2020. In rural areas alone, unemployment increased from 3.4% to 7.2% during this same time period. Consequently, workers were laid off with little relief from the government. Monthly stipends of as low as \$90 USD were allocated to certain workers in the informal sector. This amount was not enough to cover the needs of rent or food for most families, and the government often delayed payment distribution or missed it altogether (Abouzzohour, 2020). Thus, many Moroccans were left in a difficult financial situation.

Border closures and hesitancy to travel have hurt the Moroccan tourism industry which is an essential part of the nation's economy and job market. The tourism sector accounts for about 6.4% of the country's GDP (Abouzzohour, 2020). Not only does the economy rely on tourism, but individuals also depend on it for their livelihood. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), tourism in Morocco generates about 500,000 jobs directly and 2.5 million jobs indirectly (OECD, *Impact of COVID-19 in Morocco*, 2020). Furthermore, due to closures and travel restrictions, researchers found that the tourism industry was the most affected by this crisis with 89% of businesses in the sector shut down (Dehbi & Sebbar, 2021). This is not surprising as pre-pandemic Moroccan tourism relied heavily on foreign visitors. In 2018, 16,866 of those who stayed in hotels or similar establishments in the country were inbound travelers, while only 7,166 were domestic travelers (OECD, *Tourism Trends and Policies 2020*, 2020). A majority of tourists staying in hotel-like accommodations were traveling from outside Morocco, so these establishments are particularly impacted by border closures.

The Moroccan government provided some business aid, particularly to those in the tourism sector. There were reduced lending rates and tax deferrals for eligible businesses. In January 2022 the Minister of Tourism, Fatima-Zahra Ammor, allocated \$216 million to revive the tourism industry (Anouar, 2022). Despite these efforts and reopening borders, business owners are struggling to recover. Not all businesses qualify for the aid from the Tourism

Emergency Plan and are still having to pay off debts as well as pay employees (Benoit, 2022). With Moroccan borders opening again February 7, 2022, many hope the industry can bounce back; however, foreign tourists still face travel restrictions and domestic Moroccan tourists may limit their travel due to pandemic-induced financial situations. To understand the magnitude of the pandemic's impact on Morocco, one must better understand the importance of tourism to the country.

2.3 TOURISM IN MOROCCO

The Moroccan government has consistently demonstrated that the tourism industry is a key pillar of their economy and has continuously provided plenty of resources for the sector to prosper in the long run. In 2019, the World Economic Forum ranked Morocco 26th in the world for government prioritization of the development of the Travel and Tourist Industry. Consequently, tourist arrivals increased by 7.6% each year from 2012 to 2019. Figure 10 shows a steady increase in tourist arrivals, followed by a sharp 79% decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Ministry of Tourism, 2021).

Figure 10

Annual Tourist Arrivals to Morocco from 2000 to 2020 (World Tourism Organization, 2021).



Leading up to the pandemic, the Moroccan government prioritized the growth of the tourism sector. These investments paid off as more tourists traveled to the region. For example,

2017 was a record year for the industry, experiencing a 10% increase in tourist numbers compared to the previous year, which is unparalleled when compared to other adjacent North African tourist destinations (Ministry of Tourism, 2021).

A driving force for Morocco's growth in the tourism industry is government support in both foreign and national policy. With over 40% of international tourists traveling by air worldwide, Morocco's decision to open its airspace with the EU in 2006 liberalized air travel and placed the country on the radar for an affordable and accessible getaway from the European continent (Steenbruggen, 2016). Low-cost carriers (LCC) such as Ryanair and EasyJet capitalized on this opportunity and flooded the market with inexpensive travel solutions for EU citizens and the Moroccan diasporas living on the European continent. Between 2005 and 2012, the number of flights between the EU and Morocco for LCCs increased by 87%, completely outcompeting the national flag carriers that once dominated the restricted aviation market (Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013). In addition, the rise of LCCs reshaped the landscape of airline routes, with nearly 70 new routes offered between 2005 and 2012 (Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013). This suggests that the increase in competition created a more robust and diverse network, with more direct flight options to smaller regional airports available for international tourists to choose from (Dobruszkes & Mondou, 2013).

Alongside foreign incentive policies, the Moroccan government has implemented long-term strategies internally to bolster Morocco's popularity as an international tourist destination. After King Mohammed VI of Morocco acceded to the throne in 1999, the Kingdom created a new tourism initiative, known as 'Vision 2010.' This comprehensive policy aimed to create a roadmap for the industry until 2010, while also strengthening cooperation between the public and private sectors (Steenbruggen, 2016). The key target for 'Vision 2010' was to have 10 million tourists by 2010. Starting off with 4.3 million tourists in 2000, the 10 million target was ultimately within arm's reach as the country recorded 9.3 million visitors in 2010 (Ministry of Tourism, 2021). Following the successes of the previous goal, 'Vision 2020' aimed to improve upon the shortcomings of the previous policy by providing a slew of objectives on the national and regional levels (Roudies, 2010). 'Vision 2020' most notably proposed a new governance framework to increase the "competitiveness and attractiveness" of the various territories in Morocco (Roudies, 2010). Sustainable tourism was also a key component, with areas such as Marrakech recommended to "limit negative externalities on people and the environment" by

reducing hotel development (Roudies, 2010). The ‘Vision 2010’ and ‘Vision 2020’ initiatives demonstrate that the Moroccan government understands the value of the tourism industry in the country’s long-term success and has established measures to solidify the sector’s competitiveness against other Mediterranean tourist destinations.

Rural tourism, a subcategory of sustainable tourism, was also one of the areas of development that the Vision initiatives wanted to address. Rural tourism refers to the process of experiencing rural landscapes and embracing cultural traditions in local establishments (Juganaru et al., 2008). One of the key factors limiting the success of rural tourism in Morocco is the lack of a cohesive identity. “[O]ften lack[ing] market access, know-how, and financial resources,” small businesses situated in rural environments struggle to compete against the cultural attractions of Fez and Casablanca (Kagermeier et al., 2019). The top-down administrative approach exacerbates this problem, as it fails to account for the unique financial and logistical challenges that smaller stakeholders in the rural tourism industry must face (Kagermeier et al., 2019). Although the convenience of online booking platforms has greatly increased the accessibility for international tourists to visit the rural parts of Morocco, there is an unrealized potential for the rural tourism industry (Kagermeier et al., 2019).

2.3.1 REASONS FOR RURAL TOURISM IN MOROCCO

There is an emphasis on the tourism industry because Morocco is a unique travel destination that has a lot of appeal to tourists. Despite the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Moroccan tourism, studies show new tourist opportunities for rural destinations. In their review, Stankov et al. found a shift in travel demands toward more meaningful tourist activities since the pandemic began (2020). Furthermore, post-pandemic travelers are more likely to seek out "stress-relief and rejuvenation" in nature-based environments (Altınay Özdemir & Yildiz, 2020). Rural destinations in Morocco can fulfill these newfound tourist desires. This industry houses a plethora of offerings ranging from natural scenery to cultural festivals and religious sites. The geography of Morocco provides a range of diverse landscapes. Morocco is split into regions known as the High (Haut) Atlas, the Anti Atlas, and the Middle (Moyen) Atlas as shown in Figure 11 (Marrakchis, 2022). The Anti-Atlas, having a bleak climate, is known for its mountain ranges and charm. Some areas have exotic plant and animal life, while others present more geology and culture. The Middle Atlas is more geared towards tourism. Many of

the basins in this region flow directly into the Atlantic Ocean, providing even more access to various life and picturesque locations. The High Atlas, also known as the “roof of Morocco ” is the site of the highest peak in North Africa, Mount Toubkal. The stretch of areas that form the High Atlas represents the main economic pillars and the societal backbone of Morocco (Marrakchis, 2022).

Figure 11 shows a map of Morocco (Furian, 2022) including the extension into the Western Sahara, which Morocco considers to be under Moroccan sovereignty (Goldstein, 2008). The city of Marrakech is labeled on the map, which should be noted as part of the High Atlas region in Morocco.

The image in Figure 12 depicts Mt. Toubkal, or Djebel Toubkal. The mountainous peak is in Toubkal National Park, south of the popular city of Marrakesh. Standing at 4,167 meters high this mountain is the main hiking objective in the Atlas Mountains (Auberge Atlas).

Figure 11
Map of Morocco



Figure 12
Djebel Toubkal



Though the culture varies by region, the welcoming atmosphere persists throughout the country. According to the Discover Morocco official webpage, Morocco’s “long-standing traditions blend seamlessly with modernity” (Marrakchis, 2022). Morocco stands as an ideal filming location for world-renowned cinema, but the historic festivals also bring vibrance and life to the streets. A prime example is the Tan Tan festival in Marrakech, which began in 1963 to celebrate tribal competitions and rituals (*UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2008). Another unique characteristic of Morocco is the varying dialects that are spoken, stemming from the three

most commonly spoken languages: Moroccan Arabic (Darija), Tamazight, and French. Darija being the most profound dialect, as preferred by 70% of Moroccan families, still has French influence from prior colonization (Njoku, 2006). Religion in Morocco also contributes heavily to language, of which 99% of Moroccans identify as Muslim. The dialect spoken in religious ceremonies differs by region, and how each region has strayed from prior colonization (Boutieri, 2016). A strong sense of religion permeates throughout the country, which allows people to connect through their religious and spiritual beliefs. An important religious site for Moroccans is a mosque, as this is where one would go to pray. The well-known mosque in Casablanca, Morocco (Hassan II Mosque) stands out due to its size, history, and recent modern implications of technology (Roberson, 2014). Further, a place to strengthen cultural and social connections is a *hammam* or a thermal bath. Though in more recent years many have added in-home baths or washing areas, hammams continue to provide a stable and traditional space for one to clean themselves or relax. They are an important facet of cultural tradition, and a way to practice hygiene (Brame, 2018).

The ritual of serving mint-tea, and its consumption in Morocco, also has a role in traditional culture and hospitality (Sudakov, 2006). One of the many auberges located in Tamatert is Auberge Atlas Tamatert, depicted in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13

Communal Dining Area in Auberge Atlas Tamatert



Considered part of the daily routine, the symbolic mint-tea is on the front table, with a view of the Atlas Mountains through the windows. Taken from the point of view of a tourist, or one staying in the inns shows what an experience in Tamatert may look like (Auberge Atlas).

It is important to understand the appeals of the local Tamatert auberges. Tamatert, Imlil is a village consisting of five auberges, or French inns (Personal communication). According to Dr. Zineb Rhajbal, a professor of marketing at Mohammed V University, the inns have extremely low prices considering the quality of service and appearance. By the mountains of the High Atlas and roughly 43 miles outside the city of Marrakech (Google, n.d.), Imlil and its inns offer various amenities. One of the most popular offers is hiking the Atlas Mountains, including Mt. Toubkal. There are hiking tours offered around the area, or one could tackle the adventure individually. The inns also provide great views of the village landscapes for those who may be interested in photography or videography, as well as kitchens with a continuous supply of tea. Another use of the kitchens is cooking classes to understand and perfect local cuisine. The well-invested inns are rich in local culture, and an extremely accessible resource for any traveler (*Auberge Atlas*).

2.3.2 HISTORY OF TAMATERT

Tamatert's origins are largely undocumented and are passed down by word of mouth. Tamatert began with a group of three Amazigh families that settled in the village. Now the village comprises seven, close-knit families. The French came to the region to trek around and summit Mount Toubkal, which they measured and declared to be the highest peak in North Africa. Much of the documented information about this region comes from the physical data collected by the French, so it excludes relevant cultural or historical information. There are several meanings of Tamatert that vary by family. One of these meanings is "exposed land to the sun;" the snow remains on the surrounding mountain tops, but melts in the village as it is exposed to the sun for the entire day. Another meaning of Tamatert is "an example." This meaning does not have a direct translation and might not have as significant a cultural meaning in English; however, it can be interpreted in several ways. Being an example or role model to another is one interpretation (Personal Communication). As of 2009, there was no road from Imlil to Tamatert, only a footpath. Five years prior in 2004 a Swiss woman, Jacqueline Brandt, established the village's first known lodging for visitors: Douar Samra. Brandt built a traditional Amazigh house of pisé, wood, and stone with comfortable beds and toilets for visitors to Tamatert. The lodge became a part of the community, using bread baked by neighbors and involving locals in management. Since Douar Samra's opening, several other inns have opened in Tamatert, welcoming visitors to the village (Iseard, 2009).

2.3.3 NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF FOREIGN TOURISTS

Although the tourism industry is a significant source of income for the country of Morocco, there are certain frustrations that adversely affect the locals. There is a link between tourism and a negative environmental impact in Northern Africa. This risk stems from construction sites building new tourist destinations or the excessive use of water and energy. Morocco is already a water-scarce country, so an influx of foreign tourists creates a greater need for available resources. However, El Menyari found that “the growth of tourism has a... neutral [environmental effect] in Morocco” (2021). Compared to other North African countries like Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt, the environmental effects of tourism exclusively in Morocco are not significant enough to harm the country.

Additionally, many locals remain dissatisfied with the “reputation” of their country to some foreigners. Author Rachid Agliz describes the “exotic and orientalist appeals associated with North Africa prompted many American and European travel writers to venture to Morocco to embrace a new cultural otherness” (2016). For many outsiders, Morocco is a unique and exotic destination that takes a certain socioeconomic status to travel to. Rather than appreciating the natural beauty of the country, many foreigners simply think of it as a destination and not the entire “experience” that locals pride themselves on creating. In recent years the stigma faded away because many Moroccans realized the priority of economic growth due to the tourism industry (Almeida-García, 2018). Still, it is important to understand the cultural and local attractions to properly market rural businesses to local tourists.

2.4 MARKETING

Effective marketing strategies are necessary to encourage Moroccans to vacation locally throughout rural Morocco. To gain a better understanding of what strategies can help market the inns in Tamatert, it is crucial to get a general idea of what marketing entails. Marketing is often described by the “four Ps”: product, price, place, and promotion. These concepts should be combined in order to effectively market a product or service. The first ‘P’, product, ensures that the good will satisfy the desired customer. There is more to this than the functionality of the actual product. Other things such as packaging, quality, features, services, and branding can

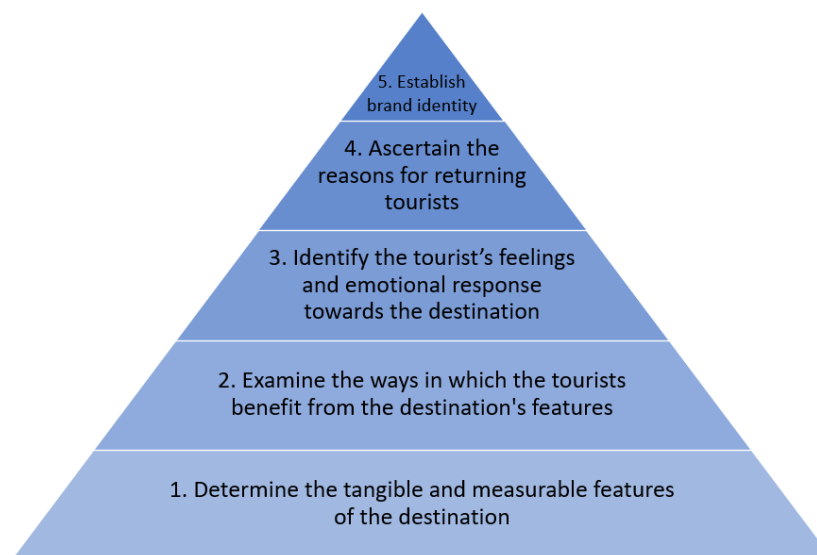
factor into this. Identifying and thoroughly researching the target audience or customer is an essential part of this aspect. This will help provide leverage over competitors (Ehmke et al., p. 1). Price refers to how much the customer will have to pay for the good or service. Well-priced products are essential to efficient marketing. One common misconception, especially among small businesses, is that the lowest-priced item will be the most successful. This is a frequent misconception because customers may believe the quality is compromised and the business will ultimately lose profit (Ehmke et al., p. 2). Place deals with the distribution of goods to the appropriate customers. In this case, it is critical to consider if a direct seller or reseller will provide the commodity (Ehmke et al., p. 3) Lastly, promotion points to how sellers advertise and market the product or service. The best forms of promotion reach the desired audience and have a clear message. It must get the attention of the customer while eliciting some sort of emotional response that will get them to purchase. There are various ways that products can be advertised. This includes radio, television, print, electronic, and word of mouth (Ehmke et al., p. 4-5) The four P's encompass a set of concepts that brands can consider when marketing their own service or product (Ehmke et al).

As stated before, an essential part of marketing is branding. Authors Kenneth Clow and Donald Baack define a brand as “the name that identifies a company, its goods, and/or its services” (Stevens et al., 2012). Successful branding is critical to understanding how a certain market, product, company, or service can make an impact on its customers. In general, a successful brand elicits a response or emotion within the target audience: “all successful brands have social, emotional and identity value to users: they have personalities and enhance the perceived utility, desirability and quality of a product” (Morgan, 2002). Many successful global companies or industries have a unique and distinct brand that is recognizable. In other words, brands have a head and a heart. The head deals with the logistics of a product and service, while the heart deals with the unconscious emotions that customers feel. Brands should evoke particular values and connotations. For example, you would want to create a brand based on chicness or lavish French lifestyles if you were trying to sell French perfumes. Often, branding can be thought of as a pyramid (Figure 14). The questions within the pyramid can help guide the formation of an effective brand. There are several categories of branding that can be examined (Morgan 2002).

Destination branding particularly focuses on how destinations within a country can help encourage people to come to their area (i.e., tourism). Destinations must create a unique image of themselves. Effective branding is critical in the current global marketplace, especially in countries where tourism accounts for a large portion of economic vitality like Morocco. Destination branding organizations unfortunately do not have as much money as other larger global companies. This can make it especially difficult for smaller businesses and businesses in middle-income countries to adapt in tougher times.

Figure 14

Destination Branding Pyramid



Note. The branding pyramid describes the logical steps to consider to effectively market a tourist destination (Modified after Morgan, 2002, p. 71).

The tourism industry itself is already turbulent and subject to external change. Major events such as political conflicts, terrorist events, and economic crises can cause a disturbance to normal tourism routines (Morgan 2002). The COVID-19 pandemic is a perfect example of this as previously described. Small businesses faced extreme consequences compared to other larger businesses. Many businesses, in general, had to adapt to online marketing strategies when lockdowns were put into place. This was especially relevant in middle-income countries as their internet penetration rates are low. Internet penetration refers to the percentage of a population that uses the internet. Countries in Asia and Africa have some of the lowest rates compared to North America and Europe (Akpan et al., 2020).

Other forms of marketing include neuromarketing, mobile marketing, and blog marketing. These can be used to further promote destination branding. Neuromarketing focuses on the unconscious preferences that customers hold in certain aspects. This can be supported through visual support, recognizability, and the overall appeal of the brand. Mobile marketing studies the importance of having resources easily accessible on mobile sites, such as on one's cell phone (Dyachenko et al., 2021). Ensuring that the brand can be communicated on a variety of different devices or social networks is crucial to increasing the interactivity of the brand. Interactivity can help the way that customers interact with the brand online (Barreda et al., 2016). Lastly, blog marketing is typically associated with internet sources that have images of the product or service with the associated text. A new form of this sort of marketing is video blogging (i.e., "vlogging") (Barreda et al., 2016). All these marketing techniques can be considered in the context of rural tourism. It is important to examine the factors that can influence the existence of successful tourism in rural areas.

Many consider rural tourism to be a non-traditional development strategy that promotes economic growth. It typically has its advantages in that it is less costly than other forms of tourism and easier to implement. Not only does rural tourism bring people to the desired attraction, but it can also further aid small businesses in the area. Researchers completed a study that identified ten main factors or conditions that can contribute to the overall execution and success of rural tourism. These include a complete tourism package, good community leadership, support from local government, sufficient funds, strategic planning, coordination between investors and local owners, cooperation between numerous local entrepreneurs, technical assistance, good convention, and visitor bureaus, and overall community support (Wilson et al., 2001). A wide range of considerations must be critically thought about when trying to market and promote rural tourism.

Rural destinations, like the inns in Tamatert, have unique settings and cultural backgrounds that lend themselves to storytelling; this is an effective tool for enhancing brand competitiveness, particularly for the purpose of tourism development in a digital age. Stories are an essential part of the human experience, and it is telling that nearly every religion and culture share narratives to preserve their values. When someone tells a story about a place they love or care deeply about, they can both "stimulate interest and motivate tourists (and even residents) to expand their experiences in the place" (Bassano et al, 2019). The authors discuss the opportunity

for place storytelling in our digital age. Before sharing a story, one must understand and define the value proposition of the region. Value proposition “describes the benefits customers can expect from your products and services” (Osterwalder et al, 2014). The story should express a value proposition that is consistent with the region’s characteristics and aligns with the expectations of stakeholders. First, the researcher should identify unique characteristics of the region such as natural landscapes, infrastructure, customs, and traditions that competitors cannot easily adopt. Next in the process of story building, one must define the plot and style of the story. Some possible plots include comedy and evocation. Then one writes the story that elicits the essence of the place and strengthens people’s connections to the region. After writing and sharing a story, one must follow the continuous step of story listening (Bassano et al, 2019). In this step, one monitors the success of the story, oftentimes through digital interaction with clients. In this project, storytelling may be an effective marketing technique to share the unique experience of Tamatert and its auberges, especially on a digital platform. The pandemic caused adverse effects on humans and global economics; however, there is a chance for smaller businesses to expand their marketing techniques.

2.4.1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The intersection of brand creation and user experience is critical to create an appealing and effective logo. In any logo or digital product created for a brand, there are several aspects that must be kept in mind. The human brain continuously searches for patterns; it often converts ambiguous visual information into familiar shapes or patterns through a series of shortcuts. These shortcuts are known as the seven Gestalt Principles: figure-ground, similarity, proximity, common region, continuity, closure, and focal point (Wong, 2010).

Figure-ground deals with the orientation of objects in a visual logo or product. If components are in the front, it signals to the viewer that they are the primary focus. Similarity refers to the practice of the viewer grouping things that visually appear similar. Proximity explains how when objects are close in space, they are often associated with each other. In other words, if an image and text are next to each other, then we connect them in some way. Common region is similar to proximity, in which we group items that share a closed region together. Designers accomplish this by using borders or enclosures. Continuity infers that components in a line or curve are related to each other. Viewers are naturally inclined to follow continuous or

smooth lines in an image. The principle of closure explains that when there are missing elements in a logo, the brain automatically fills in those parts. Lastly, focal point describes the component of a visual product that stands out first, thus catching the viewer's attention first. One can accomplish this by making that object a different size, shape, color, or adding dimension to the most important element. Gestalt principles are critical to understand and consider when designing a logo. It allows creators to effectively use elements of color, shape, or size to direct a viewer's attention to certain areas and therefore influence their opinion or behavior on a subject (7 Gestalt Principles of Visual Perception, n.d.).

Color is a crucial aspect of user experience and can provide meaning to brand identity. There are several considerations that deal with color theme, contrast, consistency, and hierarchy. Color themes are important as they ensure accessibility for the user and allow different elements of a page to be distinguished easily. In general, the color themes that are chosen should be consistent, distinct, and intentional. This means that similar color schemes should be used throughout the entire brand. Colors should have clear constructs to improve user experience and bring attention to certain elements, and all choices must have meaning. Color contributes heavily to brand development. Users often associate colors with a certain action or feeling. For example, if a designer wants to convey enthusiasm or energy, they use a subtle color scheme (Material Design, n.d.).

Typography includes two main concepts of legibility and readability. Both are critical to consider as they influence the usability and attractiveness of a logo or other visual product. There is a clear distinction between the two, "While legibility is determined by the characters in a typeface, readability refers to how easy it is to read words or blocks of text, which is affected by the style of a typeface" (Material Design, n.d.). In addition to the concepts, there are other physical components to examine including sizing, spacing, and layout. These allow the user to follow relevant information on a webpage or within a logo. They contribute to the overall layout of titles, headlines, and subtitles (Material Design, n.d.). The more convenient and appealing these things are to the reader, the more likely they will consume the appropriate information.

2.5 BACKGROUND SUMMARY

To summarize, if we want to deploy effective local marketing strategies, we must understand Moroccan cultural contexts and adapt to the changing tourism environment. The COVID-19 pandemic adversely impacted the human, social, and economic pillars of global society. As a country, Morocco suffered greatly. Their reliance on the tourism industry, driven by unique religious, cultural, and natural attractions, especially impacted their economy and small businesses. While these attractions can endure a pandemic, travel behaviors—both global and domestic—have reduced visitors to these areas; thus, there is an opportunity to use new and effective marketing tactics to revitalize the tourism industry.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The goal of this project was to help increase local tourism in the Tamatert area. Our sponsor discovered a unique opportunity to promote rural tourism in the village. To accomplish this, we created three objectives:

Objective 1: Identify the motivations and booking habits of Moroccan tourists, including those who have traveled to Tamatert.

Objective 2: Develop a brand identity for Tamatert.

Objective 3: Create a functional landing page prototype to model direct booking opportunities and further market Tamatert as a tourist destination.

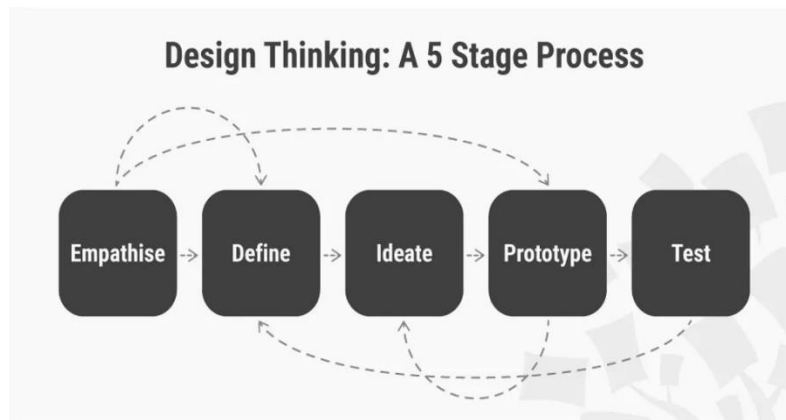
We explain the methods used to solidify and accomplish these objectives with tangible deliverables in the following sections.

3.1 THE DESIGN PROCESS

Given the design focus of our project, our methods were completed using a Design Thinking Process. This process was critical to better understand the project context and help inform decisions we made throughout our research. The design methodology is a human-centered technique composed of five stages: *empathize*, *define*, *ideate*, *prototype*, and *test* (Dam, n.d.). This process is non-linear and iterative, with many of the steps happening in parallel and repeated multiple times. See Figure 15 for a visual of this process.

Figure 15

Five-Stage Design Thinking Process Used to Achieve Project Objectives



The goals of each step are presented below:

- **Empathize:** Gain an empathetic understanding of the problem by building a genuine connection and engagement with the target audience.
- **Define:** Analyze findings to compose a problem statement in a human-centered manner, such that the “problem” is understood as an opportunity for improvement.
- **Ideate:** Think outside the box to explore as many innovative solutions as possible that support the defined opportunity.
- **Prototype:** Select the most useful ideas and create tangible models of the product with a user-centric mindset.
- **Test:** Run user testing sessions to observe how users interact with the prototypes and gather valuable feedback on the proposed solutions (Dam, n.d.).

Each step served an important role in successfully completing our three objectives and guided the designs for our ultimate deliverables. We outline our specific methodology for each stage below.

3.2 EMPATHIZE

The first stage required us to gain an empathetic understanding of the project opportunity. We asked the question: What can we create to convince more Moroccans to come to Tamatert?

We accomplished this by surveying tourists in the Imlil area, as well as documenting our own experiences in the village and its culture through the completion of auto-ethnographies. To document our experiences, we used a Sony RX100 camera to collect photographs and videos of the area. We focused on capturing the indoor components of the inns, along with the landscapes of the mountains and village. We also completed interviews with inn managers to understand their needs and recognize what they were proud of regarding their small businesses.

3.2.1 TOURIST SURVEYS

To understand the factors that attract tourists to the Imlil region, we surveyed Moroccan tourists in the town during our visit as well as those that visited in the past. Sample questions with provided multiple choice options (if applicable) are shown in Table 1 below, while the complete survey is in Appendix D. The survey asks questions about how participants learned about Imlil to better understand current marketing for the region. Learning about motivations for travel told us what exactly attracts travelers to the area. We utilized personal contacts to find those who had visited Imlil; then we used an opportunistic sampling procedure to survey Moroccans visiting Imlil. These surveys were completed electronically on Qualtrics either by team members orally asking questions or by sending the link to participants via WhatsApp.

Table 1

Sample Tourist Survey Questions

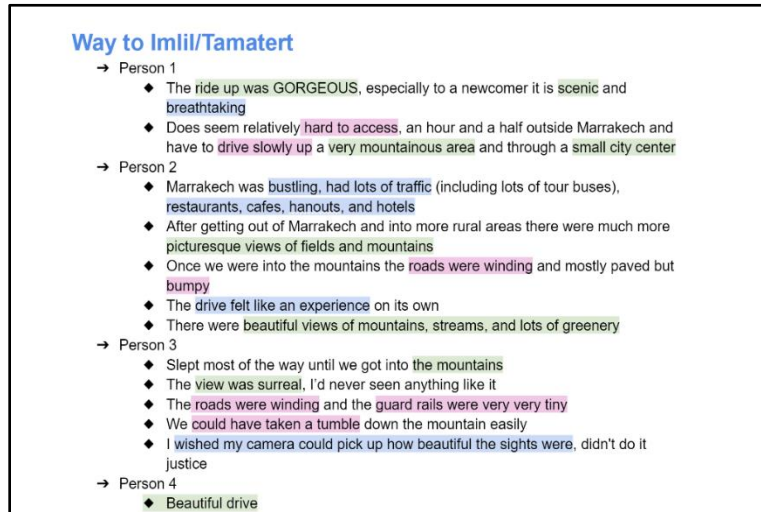
1. How did you learn about Imlil (and/or surrounding villages)? a. Family or friend b. Social media c. Advertisement d. Other
2. Please explain your reason or motivation for coming to Imlil.
3. Have you stayed in the Imlil area more than once? If yes, state how many times. a. Yes i. [Text box to state how many times] b. No, only once

3.2.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Observation of the inns, their dynamics, and attractions within Tamatert were crucial in comprehending the village’s identity. To collect this data, we used participant observation, more specifically focused observation. We used observation because it allows for the collection of additional qualitative information, including descriptions or images of the inns and village. As a team we stayed in Auberge Atlas Tamatert to see the environment from a tourist’s perspective. We gathered data on the physical environment, daily routines, activities, descriptions of participants, and interactions between tourists and owners or employees. Our observations were focused on several topics including the drive to Tamatert, Imlil, Tamatert itself, and each of the inns. We recorded this data via individualized field notes as seen in Figure 16. Entries included dates, times, and locations for each topic.

Figure 16

Written Field Notes from Group Members



Autoethnography is a research method “that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience” (Ellis, C et al, 2011). In our case, we utilized autoethnography to collect qualitative data of the emotions, such as trust, attachment, and engagement, we felt as travelers to Tamatert and as customers at the inns. We also included information regarding the journey to Tamatert and the village’s setting itself. We collected autoethnographic data through photographs, journal entries, and informal interviews that encompassed a personal experience. While participant observation is a method of ethnography that collects field notes, autoethnography relates more to emotions and memories. The journal-based entries also aided the storytelling aspects of marketing Tamatert.

3.2.3 INN INTERVIEWS

To help identify the marketable key traits of the inns and village, we needed to communicate with the inn owners or managers. We interviewed three inn managers and one inn owner following a semi-structured format. We had questions and key talking points beforehand; however, we allowed the interviewees to guide parts of the conversation with their own anecdotes and experiences. We used this method to gain a deeper understanding of the brand and local identity of the auberges as well as the area as a whole. We took notes of the interviews for further analysis. Table 2 displays a portion of the questions that we asked the inn managers, the

full list of questions can be found in Appendix B. The sample questions below gave us information about the origins of the inn and what they offer.

Table 2

Sample Inn Manager Interview Questions

1. Can you tell us about the inn? a. How did you become the owner/manager?
2. What aspect of the inn are you most proud of? a. What do you want visitors to enjoy most from their stay?
3. What services and amenities do you offer here? a. Are those resources consistent and publicized? b. What are the rates?

3.3 DEFINE

After completing the *empathize* stage of our methodology, we sought to define the opportunity that emerged from our analysis of the data. This is a key stage as it required us to think about how we would use this brand identity to highlight Tamatert as a tourist destination. We synthesized the data collected and used emergent thematic coding to inform the opportunity for future marketing techniques. The specific methods used to analyze our data are outlined below. Throughout the analysis process we defined our opportunity as follows: Tamatert needs a unique brand identity to attract Moroccan tourists to the village.

3.3.1 SURVEY ANALYSIS

To analyze the results, we utilized emergent thematic coding with the information collected from our survey to identify common themes amongst the responses. This classification system allowed us to learn about the reasons that make Tamatert an attractive destination to both returning and potential Moroccan tourists.

3.3.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND AUTOETHNOGRAPHY ANALYSIS

We analyzed the recorded field notes and written data by broad coding and pattern identification. From this we extracted key themes correlated to the village and inns to develop the overall brand. For the analysis of our journal writing, we utilized coding to discover emergent emotional themes.

3.3.3 INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

We utilized emergent coding of major categories and themes across the inns to analyze the qualitative data. These themes helped us unify the auberges into a larger brand for the rural destination.

3.3.4 VISUAL ANALYSIS

From the images collected in the *empathize* stage, we coded using color matching and by noting key landscape features to incorporate into the final logo. We used ColorBox by Lyft Design to generate color saturations based on the identified hex values to create a cohesive brand look. Other pictures taken were used on the final landing page prototype.

3.4 IDEATION

The ideation step is where we started to generate design ideas. This step synthesized all the information collected to formulate potential solutions for the design opportunity. Using our thematic codes, we needed to encapsulate everything that Tamatert has to offer. This stage of the design thinking process involved brainstorming, further analyzing our findings from our previous phases, and expanding our investigation to identify the elements we wanted to highlight in each deliverable. This stage also helped solidify our second and third objectives, such that we used our data to ideate well-informed and useful end products.

3.5 PROTOTYPE

Following ideation, our team created several working prototypes from the concepts that we developed during *ideation*. We created designs then shared and tested them with peers, advisors, and other stakeholders. This continuously iterates our prototype and efficiently incorporates the key elements extracted from our findings into the deliverables. From prototyping we established concrete ideas of the deliverables needed. We kept in mind our target audience of Moroccan tourists, as well as how the brand identity should represent Tamatert and give its residents a sense of pride.

3.6 TEST

The last stage of the design thinking methodology is *test*. In this stage, we solicited feedback on each design developed in the previous stages. A survey style testing method was conducted for one of the final deliverables. It is important to note we sent the final testing survey in Arabic, French, and English. We present the findings and deliverables from the *test* phase in the following chapters.

3.7 LIMITATIONS

There were several limitations that impacted the execution of our data collection. One of the larger limitations was the language barrier. No one on our research team spoke French or Darija. This affected communication between us and the local tourists in the area. To address this, Professor Mohammed El Hamzaoui translated questions and answers in Darija for our verbal methods of data collection.

Lastly, participant observation may have some discrepancies as we may have an inaccurate representation of events due to biased interpretations. All five group members were part of the participant observation study to increase the reliability of the observations made. We acknowledge that our gender, nationality, ethnicity, and class may have affected our observations

(Kawulich, 2005). In terms of autoethnography our experiences and emotions while being in Tamatert may not align with those of Moroccans.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To ensure the integrity of our research and protect the people we surveyed, we took two primary ethical considerations into account. First, the surveys completed were only presented to adult participants who gave their informed consent. This preserved participant autonomy, which is important for the validity of our data (Faden, 1986). Second, we sought to preserve the anonymity of all participants in the study. We ensured that participant's personal identity was not connected to their recorded response. This was important to establish trust between our group and our survey participants (Morse, 2015).

3.9 METHODOLOGY SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the methods, within the context of our design process, used to satisfy the research objectives. During the *empathize* stage of the design process we collected data from surveys, interviews, and participant observation/autoethnography. By collecting this data, we aimed to understand the perspectives of tourists (Objective 1) and inn management. Next, in the *define* stage, we analyzed our data using emergent thematic coding. These themes informed our *ideate* stage, where we brainstormed design elements for each of the deliverables. In the *prototype* stage, we synthesized our ideas into working prototypes of our deliverables (Objectives 2 and 3). Finally, we tested a prototype using a survey to refine our deliverables. Through this design process we were able to address our three objectives: identify the motivations and booking habits of Moroccan tourists, develop a brand identity for Tamatert, and create a functional landing page prototype for the village. Ultimately, we integrated the data obtained from tourists, participant observations, and inn managers to develop a well-rounded brand-identity for Tamatert, Morocco.

4.0 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The team analyzed the data to learn about the motivations and booking habits of local tourists. This data informed the creation of the brand identity for Tamatert, as well as the landing page prototype, by supporting the design process outlined in the previous chapter. The following chapter details the findings and analysis that resulted from data collected. This was the *empathize* stage of the design process. Considering the role that stage played in our methodology, *empathize* is omitted from our findings. Although many of the findings were results of multiple stages in the design process, we explain the outcome of each stage below.

4.1 DEFINE

4.1.1 MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

Imlil Area Provides an Escape from Densely Populated Regions

We collected 29 survey responses from Moroccan tourists that have visited the Imlil area to gain a better understanding of their travel desires. We analyzed the geographical distribution of the respondents, with respect to the twelve regions of Morocco, to understand where domestic travelers to the region are generally from.

The majority of the respondents, 51.5%, were from the Casablanca-Settat region; the next 24.2% were from the Rabat-Salé-Kénitra region. This makes 75.7% of our respondents from larger regions, typically within more densely populated cities. Taking into consideration the rural landscape of Imlil, this suggests that the respondents traveled to temporarily experience the mountainside.

To understand more about why Moroccans travel to Tamatert and Imlil in general, we asked them the reasons for their trip. 55% of respondents cited ‘vacation’ as their primary motivation for traveling to Imlil. This answer supports a theme of getaway, as the term “vacation” implies relaxation especially when compared to other options (business, visiting family or friends, and outdoor activities).

To further supplement our quantitative findings, we utilized emergent thematic coding to identify common categories and themes in the qualitative responses. The idea of escape and

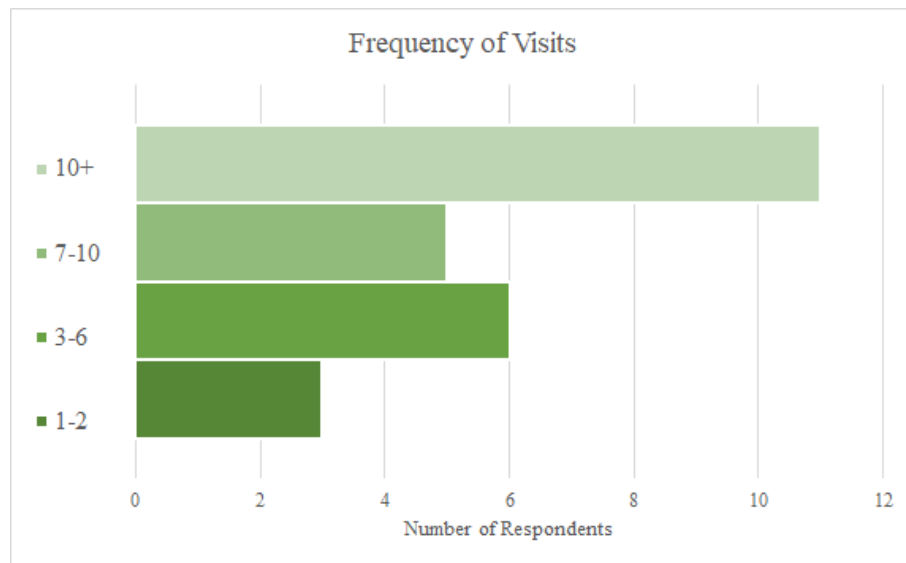
getting away from the hectic lifestyle of the major cities is supported through the codes established. As mentioned, we asked respondents to explain their reasoning or motivation for traveling to Imlil. From several categories that included mentions of “going out of routine” and “rest,” we were able to further distinguish a theme relating to escape/getaway. This finding, along with codes from our surveys like “getting out of the city” and “away from the noise,” support the idea that Moroccan travelers go to the Imlil area to escape the busy city life.

Trust is Important in Booking Travel

Another significant theme that emerged from our data collection was the concept of trust in booking a stay in the Imlil area. Figure 17 displays the number of times the respondents have visited Imlil. 88% of respondents returned to the area more than once, with 44% having gone over ten times. It is evident that people are loyal to the area because they enjoy their stay.

Figure 17

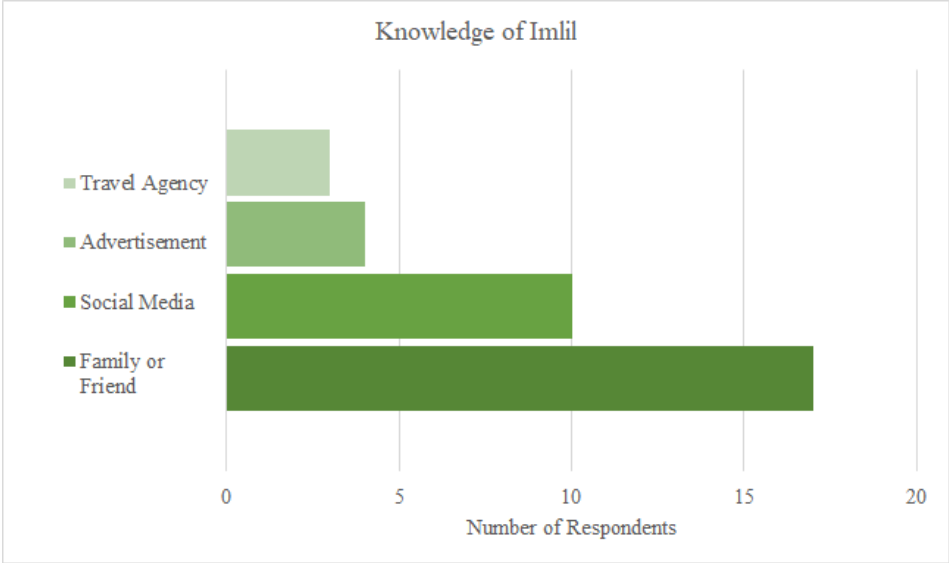
Number of Visits to Imlil Among Respondents



Below, Figure 18 depicts the breakdown of ways in which respondents learned about the Imlil area. Half of the respondents surveyed had a family or friend connection that introduced them to Imlil. Knowing a trusted individual that has been to the area and enjoyed their stay, influences others to go themselves. During meetings with our sponsor, we discussed this trust as an important cultural aspect in Morocco. Most travelers will not travel to a certain destination without personal verification beforehand; however, Moroccans will use their own personal contacts to do so. This can be done by calling friends or family to hear about their experiences.

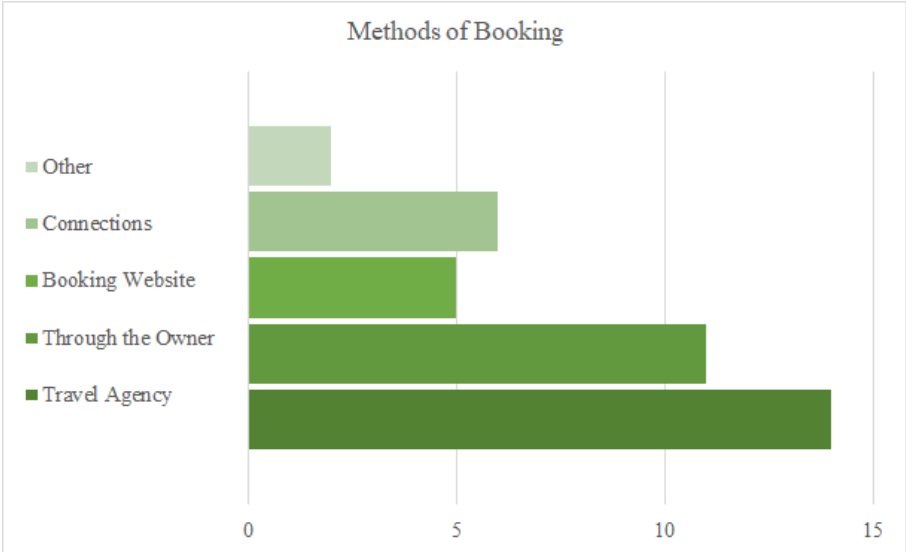
Additionally, a quarter of our respondents learned about Imlil via social media. This statistic not only shows how important social media is in making travel decisions, but also gives insight into how influential online connections are in the context of Morocco.

Figure 18
Ways Respondents Learned about Imlil



To better understand the consumer choices of our respondents, we asked exactly how they booked their stay in Imlil. As shown from Figure 19, 36.8% of the respondents relied on a travel agency to reserve their stay, and 28.9% of them directly contacted inn management.

Figure 19
Ways Respondents Booked their Stay



A key takeaway is that only 13.2% of respondents indicated using a website, such as Booking.com, to book their stay. Once again, a majority of respondents used a trust-based relationship, through a travel agency or direct contact with the inn manager, to reserve their stay. A travel agency can choose accommodations as well as plan transport and activities if desired. Direct communication with the inn provides a convenient relationship for both parties, which can help foster trust. Through this direct contact, customers can ask for details, have the inn plan excursions, and negotiate prices.

Furthermore, we asked respondents to explain why they chose the particular booking method selected in the previous question. We discovered that many preferred to use methods that were convenient and efficient. Respondents used travel agencies that “take care of logistics.”

Tourists Seek Varying Accommodations

We asked respondents to explain their reasoning behind choosing the auberge they stayed in, particularly what parts of the auberge they found attractive. Hospitality and service was a major theme that emerged. Respondents took note of the ambiance, food, cleanliness, and comfortability of the auberge. The theme of views and scenery stemmed from people talking about their appreciation of the view and overall setting around them. Lastly, while some respondents looked for specific characteristics of the auberge, others only wanted the bare minimum. This theme emerged from codes such as “place to crash,” “simple,” and “basic.” Based on the variety of responses, our data suggests that there is no dominant reason as to why tourists choose one auberge over the other. The needs of one customer may be vastly different from the next; therefore, our deliverables should appeal to a broad audience to accommodate this.

Inns' Booking Practices

For each of the inn managers we interviewed, we gathered the following data about their businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. This information is in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Booking Practices of the Inns

Auberge	Primary Booking Practices
Auberge Atlas Tamatert	65% of booking is through word of mouth
Kasbah Imlil	95% of booking if through word of mouth
Hiba Lodge	30% word of mouth, 35% from visitors in area
Les Jardins du Toubkal	Majority book online but previous guests bring in additional customers through word of mouth

All the managers interviewed, except from Les Jardins du Toubkal, mentioned the use of personal communication with potential guests. These methods of contact include digital communication through platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Inn managers preferred direct contact with customers for booking, as it avoids online fees and creates a sense of trust in the customer. Similarly, tourists surveyed also expressed using this direct contact as a favorable method of booking. Overall, most of the inn’s customers come through word of mouth. On top of this, all the auberges we interviewed expressed willingness to be on a shared platform for Tamatert. Some interviewees even explained that any additional advertisement has the potential to increase exposure for their inn.

Inns Value their Amenities, Hospitality, Local Resources, and Tradition

Through emergent thematic coding of the interview notes, common themes related to bringing in customers, the meaning of Tamatert, and what the inn managers were proud of became apparent. Inn managers described that they attract customers through their hospitality. They pride themselves in helping guests organize activities and make their stay emulate a traditional experience. The services and activities are centered around the geography of the region. For example, the inns help organize hiking trips (guides, food, equipment), as well as small walks through the village or to the town center. Overall, we found that the inns use their proximity to Mt. Toubkal and various peaks as a major selling point of their services.

The themes that related to what the interviewees were proud of regarding their inn included: the views from their inn, providing customers with an enjoyable experience, having traditional services and decor, and using local resources. The views from windows or rooms look directly at either the village as a whole or the mountain peaks. Customers can have a pleasant experience from the start as some of the inns also allow guests to choose which rooms they would like to stay in. Their experience continues within the rooms and inns, where the history of Tamatert is represented through the traditional decor. The owner of Hiba Lodge was particularly proud of building her inn with stones and wood from the ground up, with the interior design using locally sourced materials.

The last set of themes emerged from asking how the inn managers would personally define Tamatert. The themes that emerged identify Tamatert as a village rooted in tradition and a place to escape busier urban life. Additional themes are centered around the views, the presence of the warm sun, and the personal connections to the families. These themes were based on the personal description from the interviewees, where they told the stories of Tamatert's origin. Each inn manager had their own perception of how their inn came to be, but ultimately, they all found a connection to cultural tradition through food, decor, and services.

Tamatert as a Relaxing Getaway

Through participant observation and autoethnography of our stay in Tamatert, we accumulated written records focused on setting, routines, interactions, and emotions. These records are set in Imlil, Tamatert, and each of the inns as well the drive to Tamatert.

The process of emergent thematic coding allowed for several common categories and themes to emerge. We found that themes from the drive there revolved around accessibility, scenery, and ideas of a surreal experience. Tamatert was difficult to access as there was often mention of a “slow drive” on “winding” and “bumpy roads.” In terms of scenery, we coupled words like “breathtaking” and “beautiful” with comments about the infrastructure in the area blending in with nature. We described the drive as an experience itself.

Among the general area of Imlil, we found several themes including experience, nature/scenery, and amenities. The experience theme derived from codes describing the village as a “perfect escape” and “getaway.” This finding correlates with survey results that indicate Imlil as an escape from busy city life. The theme of views came from the repetitive mention of

the beautiful mountains and other natural aspects. Amenities revolved around the many shops with either traditional crafts or hiking gear, cafes, and restaurants.

Themes for Tamatert again revolved around experience, scenery, location, tourism, and activities. There were several codes related to the experience including the sounds of nature and animals, the slowed pace, and hospitality. “Beautiful views,” mountains, and the sun led to the theme of scenery. The location theme originated from codes describing the small size of the village within the large mountain range. We noted several times that Tamatert was less populated and there were fewer shops that appeared to be more catered to locals. The final theme of activities arose from codes involving hiking, walking, and discovering the village.

Along with the village and the area as a whole, we also focused on the inns themselves. When individually coding the inns, there were common themes such as hospitality/experience and design. Hospitality was a major theme as each entry noted the welcoming atmosphere and the tea and biscuits offered at each auberge. The design of each auberge differed which expressed their own unique identities. For example, Hiba Lodge was built of stone and had more neutral colors which related to its noted calmness. On the other hand, we described Les Jardins du Toubkal as having a “French/European influence” in its design. Since we stayed at Auberge Atlas Tamatert, there was more data collected for that inn. An additional theme for this auberge was amenities because we experienced them firsthand. The three meals a day were “amazing” and we often mentioned the communal area around the fireplace. We used the categories and themes that emerged from our participant observation and autoethnography to inform our design process, specifically in the *ideate* step.

4.1.2 DISCUSSION OF PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

Our findings supported three major areas of growth: uniqueness, booking, and convenience:

1. Tamatert is not differentiated from Imlil or the surrounding villages. The sense of escape, the scenery, hiking opportunities, and other amenities are standard throughout the Imlil villages.
2. The inn managers prefer a direct and trusted interaction to book customers. Despite the low commission earned on customers who book through Booking.com, the site provides

a way to guarantee they get paid before preparing for guests. Direct communication with guests gives an opportunity to negotiate prices and for the auberges to request an upfront payment, so they can start buying their food or renting equipment.

3. Tourists rely on trust and convenience, often using booking methods in which someone else will take care of the logistics. Going through a travel agency, having a guide, or directly contacting the inn manager allows tourists to only interact with one person for all their needs.

4.2 IDEATE

We provided a preliminary ideation section below to explain how our findings helped determine the specific deliverables that support our overall project goal.

4.2.1 PRELIMINARY IDEATION

Prior to deciding what to create to increase tourism for the auberges in Tamatert, the team conducted brainstorming sessions to document our thought process.

First, we thought to create a brand identity for each of the five inns we focused on for the project. This would increase the visibility for each business and give them a new and unique way to tell their story. However, most of them already established this for themselves and we did not want to promote competition between the inns. Then, we had a follow-up idea to create a brand identity for Tamatert as a whole. This cohesive identity would tell a unified story of the village and bring more attention to the distinct destination. We noted that Tamatert is inhabited by families as well as the auberges, so this identity needed to represent the entire population.

We also considered ways to provide direct booking opportunities for the auberges. A standalone booking platform for the inns could minimize the use of third-party online platforms that take 15-20% of commission. Thus, Tamatert would no longer have to go through Booking.com. However, the team decided that the upkeep and marketability for a standalone platform for five small businesses would require an in-depth financial study of the village, its infrastructure, and a further analysis of online booking habits. A landing page, however, could

increase online traffic for Tamatert and tell their story, along with the stories of each individual inn, and create a personal digital experience.

Lastly, the team discussed various marketing techniques to improve the visibility of Tamatert. This included mobile marketing, event marketing, and expanded traditional marketing. Mobile marketing is useful in reaching a specific audience through SMS, E-mail, and/or mobile applications, but this could be challenging given such a small, isolated community. Event marketing involves planning and executing an event to promote a brand or service. Increased traditional marketing with items such as posters, brochures, and billboards may catch the attention of potential tourists that didn't know what to look for. Even so, this requires further examination into where to distribute these materials.

The most well-established ideas from the ideation brainstorm were selected to continue in the *prototyping* stage. We found that our data best supported the creation of a brand identity for Tamatert as a whole and allowed for more successful marketing techniques in the future. Additionally, a supplemental landing page would use this brand identity and include the relevant information for anyone visiting or planning to visit the area. Thus, we solidified our final two objectives; create a brand identity for the village of Tamatert and a functional landing page prototype that models direct booking opportunities. Next, we detail how our findings supported the creation of each deliverable following the three final steps of the Design Thinking Process.

4.2.2 IDEATION OF THE BRAND IDENTITY

To create a cohesive brand identity for the village of Tamatert, we considered unique aspects of the inns and other local amenities. We wanted to incorporate a logo and branding booklet into the ultimate identity. As a result of this we strived to create a brand that supports the culture and traditions of Tamatert, but also appeals to tourists' desires. Kristopher Jones (2021) explains for Forbes that:

A business with elements such as a distinct logo, attractive colors, and other visual elements will be much more memorable. Someone might see your brand for only a moment, but if it sticks out in a positive way, there's a good chance they won't forget it.

We imagined our deliverables to be a brand of this nature for the village of Tamatert and embraced how the local auberges relate to each other.

Generally, in this step we identified key colors and generated different palettes to accommodate multiple designs of the logo. Using Adobe Illustrator, we designed the logo with different visual perspectives, logo assets, typographies, and colors that would showcase the themes that emerged through our data analysis. More specifically, we utilized emergent thematic codes from our qualitative data to identify elements to highlight in the design. Some of these physical elements included the streams, trails, winding roads, the sun, snow-capped mountains, and the mosque. These aspects were informed by our personal experiences in Tamatert, and further backed up by visual data from the participant observations. The mosque in Tamatert stands tall and, when hiking higher up the slopes of the village, one can see how each village in Imlil is distinguished by their minarets. Mosques are a source of religious and cultural pride for many, and we heard the calls to prayer in the village daily. We wanted to include this in our final design to further emphasize the discovery of tradition.

Second, Tamatert is framed by snow-capped mountains that are paved by streams and winding roads. We found nature and scenery to be major themes in the emergent coding process. Both local tourists and inn managers discussed this in their survey and interview responses. We wanted to include the winding roads to represent the journey to Tamatert. By including the mountains, we hoped to showcase the stunning views from the village. The final logo should include a snow-capped mountain, as well as the presence of the large sun. The snow remains on the mountains that surround the village, while the sun melts any snow in Tamatert itself. There are deep cultural meanings to the sun in relation to Tamatert. We wanted to maintain this for the final logo design. Apart from the physical elements of the logo, we also sought to convey emotions of peace, calmness, and simplicity in the design, which also stemmed from our thematic codes.

In this step, we began to propose slogans that would sum up the experience of Tamatert in a few short words. The tagline also needed to incorporate themes from our data collection and convey something that tourists would remember.

4.2.3 IDEATION OF THE LANDING PAGE

In addition to the branding booklet for our second objective, we translated the themes and designs into relevant ideas to incorporate within the landing page prototype. This step required us to come up with components we wanted to have on the site and explore different website flows.

First, there needed to be a literal landing page, or home screen for the website. We wanted this to encapsulate the brand identity, showcase images and a tagline to draw in users, introduce Tamatert with key words (i.e., Mt. Toubkal, Imlil, etc.), and utilize social media content. An all-encapsulating home page would provide enough detail to maintain a potential tourist's attention, but not be overwhelming.

We included an intuitive navigation bar to stimulate interaction with the site and provide the opportunity to explore Tamatert digitally. The home page would link to an 'About Tamatert' section that highlights what makes the village special by incorporating storytelling elements and include the proposed marketing event. The site needed to include a summary of the auberges in Tamatert and have individual pages. On each page, we wanted to streamline booking based on the inn manager's preferences, thus embedding WhatsApp for direct communication between management and customer. Additional features should include travel logistics, a description of services in the area, an image gallery, and digital blog-style reviews to address the recurring theme of trust in Moroccan culture.

We also thought of incorporating embedded Instagram posts to show images of real people passing through Tamatert. Since we found that many tourists learned about Imlil through social media, the idea was to increase the likelihood of finding Tamatert through this site.

4.3 PROTOTYPE

4.3.1 LOGO AND BRAND IDENTITY PROTOTYPE

We created several prototypes of the logo, using various color saturations from visual data. As mentioned previously we pulled key colors, but also physical elements from our visual data to include in the logo designs. The process of creating these prototypes meant we had to consistently think about our three original areas for improvement, and if necessary, redefine our justifications. Shown in Figure 20 is an initial design that puts together the identified key elements.

Despite the minimalist design, we knew we wanted to include more details, such as the snow caps and the winding roads. Here we also experimented more with various color palettes. This led to our second set of prototypes seen in Figure 21.

Figure 20

Initial Logo Prototype

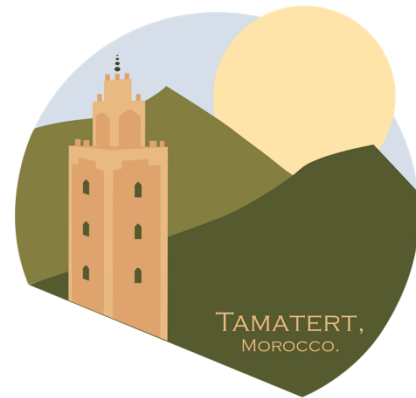
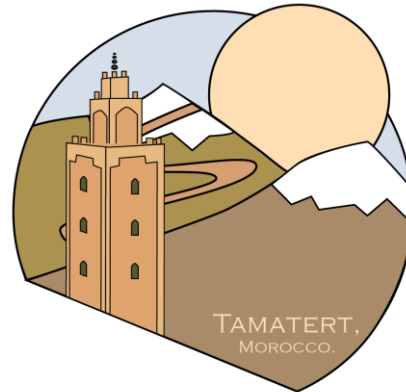


Figure 21

Second Set of Logo Prototypes



After receiving feedback from peers and advisors, we re-evaluated what our logo had to portray. Specifically, we had to look back at our first area of growth, mentioned in Section 4.1.2: Tamatert has not differentiated itself from Imlil or the surrounding villages. As seen from the

initial logo, the existence of the mosque and bare mountains did not make Tamatert appear unique, compared to other villages. This led us to our final set of prototypes shown in Figure 22 that utilized a new perspective to include each of the inns and enhanced the quality of the elements from prior designs.

Figure 22

Final Versions of Logo Prototypes with Various Color Palettes



The elements and feelings we wanted to include in the tagline for Tamatert included discovery, simplicity, the sun, and tradition. The tagline prototypes are as follows:

- Discover simplicity. Discover the mountains. Discover Tamatert.
- Leave the city behind and find where the sun always shines.
- Escape the city. Experience tradition. Discover Tradition.

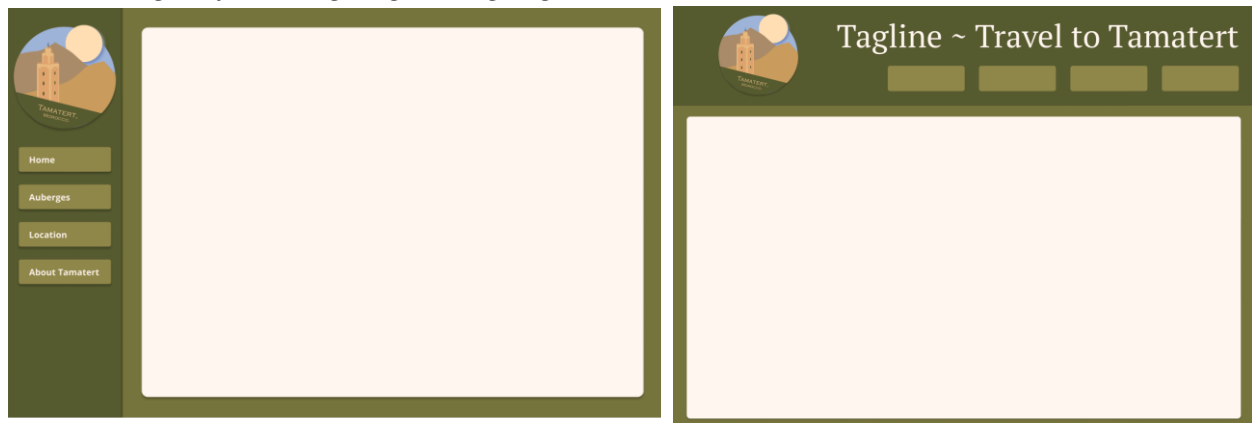
4.3.2 LANDING PAGE PROTOTYPE

We created prototypes for a landing page that showcased the new brand identity as a marketing tool, provided direct contact to the inns for booking, and incorporated user experience. This direct contact can help avoid online booking fees for the auberges from larger booking platforms. This site is a way to increase the exposure of Tamatert online, hence inspire more tourists to travel to the area.

Our group created mockups of the landing page, after reviewing multiple ideas of how to organize and display the collected information before ultimately deciding on the final design. These mockups include pictures and general layouts for the pages. We created initial designs as shown in Figure 23 to experiment with the layout and navigation bar options. This was to identify the best method to present all the visual and written information for the village of Tamatert.

Figure 23

Initial Designs of Landing Page Using Figma



After we produced mockups, we made an initial functional landing page prototype using HTML, CSS, and JQuery Programming Languages. We incorporated the pictures we captured of Tamatert as well as storytelling elements collected in the *empathize* stage. What may be a successful marketing technique in local communities in the United States, may not be what is most successful for the village of Tamatert. It was important to understand the desires of local tourists to create a landing page that catered to them (Kamau, 2015). Additionally, local business owners have different needs when preparing for guests, which translates to customized needs in terms of booking their stay. This initial version primarily served as a proof-of-concept for the features that will be added in the later versions of the landing page. Figure 24 shows our first adaptation of the landing page which includes an embedded image and a functional navigation bar.

Figure 24

Initial Functional Landing Page Prototype



Ultimately, we created a working prototype that included all the elements outlined in the *ideation* process for the page. We hosted the site online and directly linked the WhatsApp numbers for Hiba Lodge, Les Jardins du Toubkal, Atlas Tamatert, and Kasbah Imlil. Douar Samra has booking through their personal website, so we included a direct link to their site. The sample Instagram posts on the home page are static images with embedded links to the actual post to serve as an example for future iterations of the prototype. The only page that does not function as intended is the blog-style review page labeled *The Guest Book*. This page showcases sample reviews and a model for blog review submissions that future users can post.

4.4 TEST

This section outlines our findings from the testing process, and our final designs are showcased in the Deliverables and Recommendations chapter of the report.

We created a Qualtrics survey with various logo design options to send to stakeholders. The survey included questions relating to the positioning of text, the colors in the logo, and overall aesthetics. To distinguish our respondents, Question 1 of the survey asked whether people lived in Tamatert, have visited, heard of the area but did not visit, or had never heard of

Tamatert. There was a total of 158 responses amongst the three surveys in English, French, and Arabic. The next questions began to look at logo content. Question 2 asks which color palette for the logo makes them feel more “calm,” between two saturation options. Ultimately, 72.15% of the overall respondents preferred color scheme B, which included darker saturations, and more green shades.

After choosing the color scheme we asked the participants which positioning of text makes them feel more welcomed [to the area]. The responses for this question yielded neutral results as in both the Arabic and English survey respondents preferred blocked text over curved text. However, the French survey had a larger percentage of respondents prefer curved text. Overall, from the combined surveys, 53.25% preferred curved and 46.75% preferred blocked text. We noted that these percentages were very similar, so both text options elicited a welcoming feeling.

Finally, the last two questions relate to final logo designs, including arrangements of the color saturations and text positions. Overall, through the various multiple-choice options comparing logos, most respondents preferred the green coloring in the logos, as opposed to those that included more browns or tans. This led to the last question which allowed the participants to choose their favorite logo out of all the previously revealed options. The results varied for each survey; however, logo options 1 and 2 were more popular, with option 1 being slightly more preferred. Other comments on the surveys included suggestions to use green colors over tans to make the mountains stand out more. One person mentioned how they felt the logo incorporated elements inspired by Amazigh culture.

4.5 FINDINGS SUMMARY

This chapter presented our findings and justifications of the design choices for both the brand identity and the landing page prototype. We found from the perspective of tourists that Imlil provides an escape from city life, trust is important in booking travel, and tourists seek varying accommodations. From speaking to the inn managers, we concluded that they value their amenities, hospitality, local resources, and tradition. Through our own participant observation, we found that Tamatert itself is a relaxing getaway, but it has not differentiated itself from

nearby villages. Through our *ideate* and *prototyping* stages we fulfilled our second objective to create a unique brand identity for Tamatert. Additionally, we completed our third objective to create a landing page for the village using this design process; however, we did not user testing of the site. In the next chapter, we will discuss our deliverables and recommendations based on the findings we presented in this chapter for the inns of Tamatert.

5.0 DELIVERABLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the final designs for both the brand identity and the landing page prototypes while also offering suggestions on expanding these deliverables.

5.1 BRAND IDENTITY

5.1.1 BRANDING BOOKLET DELIVERABLE

Our branding booklet encompasses the unique brand identity we created for Tamatert through descriptions of the brand, proposed color palette, typography and its intended use, logo design and implementation, as well as the tagline.

Figure 25 shows the goal, vision, persona, and target audience for the brand identity. We wrote these descriptions based on our defined project opportunities and coding from findings. It was important to include these statements as they better define Tamatert's brand and its intended uses.

Figure 25

Goal, Vision, Persona, and Target Audience Statements for the Brand Identity of Tamatert

Goal	Vision	Persona	Target Audience
To create a cohesive brand identity for Tamatert, Morocco that will effectively represent and market the village to primarily Moroccan tourists.	We hope for the brand to be utilized by Tamatert and be expanded to merchandise, signage, and social media.	The brand is intended to exude a calm, welcoming feeling that relates to escape, simplicity, tradition as well as discovery. It does not emphasize strenuous activity like hiking but provides it as an option.	The target audience includes but is not limited to Moroccans seeking to escape busy cities and have disposable income to travel. They are ideally looking for relaxation and discovery.

Figure 26 includes the proposed color palette for Tamatert branding, which we color matched from our collected visual data. The precise hex values are given for each color as well as its indication as a primary brand color versus an accent color.

Figure 26

Proposed Color Palette for Tamatert Brand

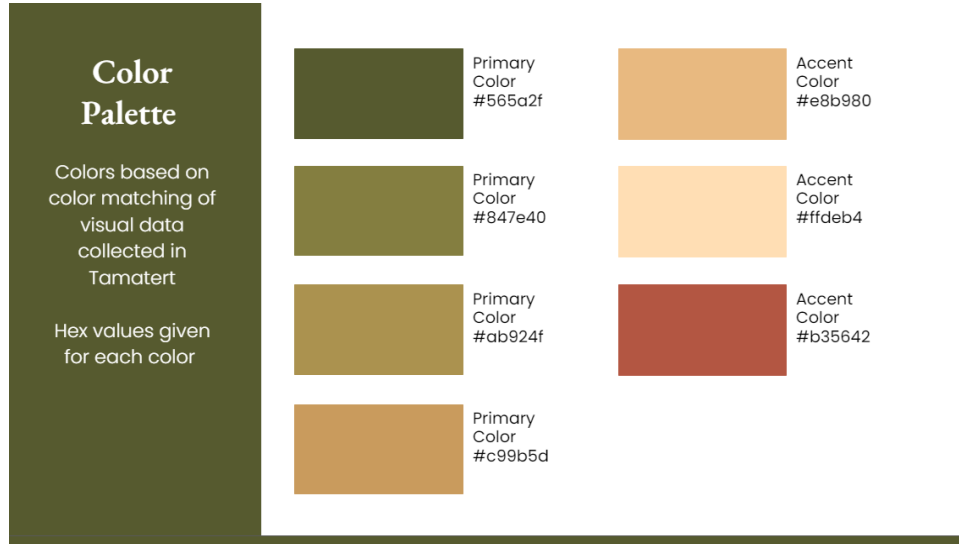


Figure 27 shows our proposed fonts and their individual uses in an example from the landing page. We used Copperplate Gothic Light as logo text. We used EB Garamond Semibold as the title text. Variations of Poppins (including normal, light, semibold, and italicized) are used for body text and some emphasized text.

Figure 27

Applications of Proposed Typography for Tamatert Brand

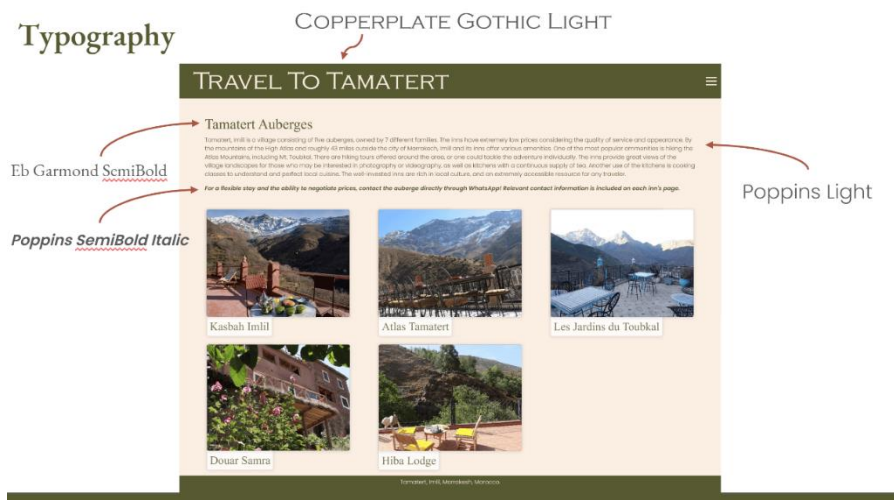
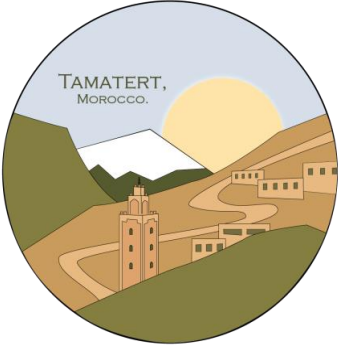


Figure 28 shows the final logo design. It includes key elements of Tamatert such as the mosque, mountains, path, sun, and inns. The color scheme and text positioning were determined by results from our logo test survey.

Figure 28
Final Logo Design



Lastly, Figure 29 presents potential taglines for Tamatert, in the proposed typography. In the branding booklet as shown, our tagline deliverable encapsulates the experience of being in Tamatert.

Figure 29
Proposed Tagline in Official Fonts from Branding Booklet
Tagline



We derived each of the three phrases from our emergent thematic codes of escaping busy city life, slowing down and living simply, discovery, and the traditions ingrained in the Tamatert area. Although the branding booklet is one of our deliverables, it pairs with a group of recommendations. We are giving the village of Tamatert a brand identity, with the hopes they

expand their marketing strategies in the future. In the following section, we discuss our detailed recommendations for the continued use of the Tamatert brand identity.

5.1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRANDING IDENTITY

Expand the use of Tamatert Brand Identity

By expanding the usage of the recommended logo and tagline in the branding booklet, a unified brand identity of Tamatert can be established. Our team recommends including the logo on their respective websites and social media accounts. Further use of the logo could be in the form of physical objects such as water bottles, bags, and street signs (Figure 30). By doing so, this will increase the recognition of Tamatert as a village, and hopefully draw in more customers to stay there while visiting.

Figure 30

Designed Logo on Physical Marketing Materials



Create a Unified Social Media Presence

Through our interviews with the inn managers in Tamatert, all of them expressed interest in cooperating with each other to create a collective platform for customers to learn about their services. Our team suggests the creation of a unified social media account, such as an Instagram or Facebook page that highlights Tamatert's setting, accommodations, people, and happenings. The inns can feature things to do, views to see, and people to meet in the village. Incorporating storytelling into the social media posts can convey the experience of staying in Tamatert, which encourages tourists to visit the village and learn more about it. Our findings show that 29.4% of the respondents discovered Imlil via social media, with the majority of the respondents being

present in Imlil instead of Tamatert. Posting regular updates and photographs of the inns will hopefully garner attention for Tamatert and encourage followers to stay in the village.

Organize Event Marketing

Through our results, we had drawn the conclusion that Tamatert, while attractive and appealing, does not have any unique, differentiable aspects. Our project provides branding material that will set it apart; however, more work needs to be done to ensure that it truly stands out. A possible way for inns to attract customers is by coordinating marketing strategies utilizing storytelling. Rural destinations have unique settings and cultural backgrounds that lend themselves to this idea. To capitalize on these aspects, Tamatert could hold festivals or events that will allow the village to showcase its historical and cultural background, while also bringing people together. For example, the village of Imilchil holds a yearly marriage festival in September with the tribes of the area. This festival is an example of how another village distinguished themselves as a unique destination. Here, people can witness the process of women searching for and choosing their potential husband. This three-day festival is based on a legend from Aït Yaazza culture and holds deep meaning to the locals (Silverstein & Crawford, 2004). Using this as a source of inspiration, Tamatert should seek to organize cultural festivities to stand out from the Imlil area.

5.2 LANDING PAGE

5.2.1 FUNCTIONAL LANDING PAGE DELIVERABLE

The landing page prototype incorporates the brand identity of Tamatert from the branding booklet. It also serves as a platform for tourists to learn about the village of Tamatert and the five inns, to make a well-informed decision when selecting a place to stay. We designed several subpages to present all of the relevant information that we collected during our visit to Tamatert. This includes storytelling elements, visual data, and available services from each inn.

Figure 31 illustrates the home page that visitors see when they open the landing page. When the visitor clicks the three horizontal lines on the top right corner, the navigation bar will appear as shown in Figure 32.

Figure 31
Landing Page – Home Page

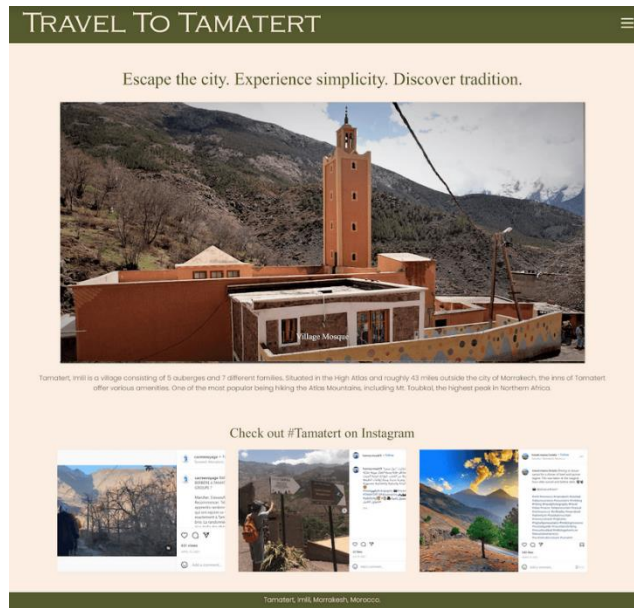


Figure 32
Landing Page – Navigation Bar

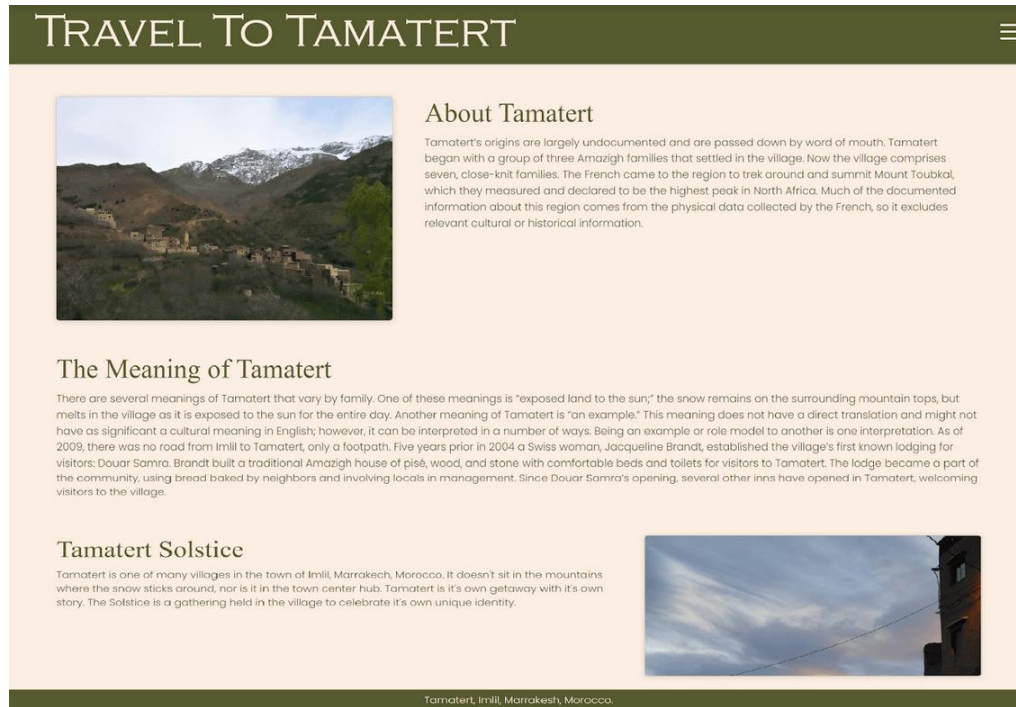


The navigation bar includes the logo of Tamatert from the branding booklet and the list of subpages available. The home page includes the tagline, a gallery of photos, along with captions for each photo. Posts that use the hashtag “#Tamatert” on Instagram were included underneath. We hyperlinked each post which allowed the visitor to click and view in greater detail on Instagram’s official website.


The About Tamatert page, as shown in Figure 33 provides a brief history of Tamatert as a village situated in the Imlil area. We incorporated the personal communication data of the origins and meaning of the name of Tamatert into our descriptions. In order to visualize the rural landscape of the village we included relevant photographs of the scenery of Tamatert.

Figure 33

Landing Page – About Tamatert Page



TRAVEL TO TAMATERT



About Tamatert


Tamatert's origins are largely undocumented and are passed down by word of mouth. Tamatert began with a group of three Amazigh families that settled in the village. Now the village comprises seven, close-knit families. The French came to the region to trek around and summit Mount Toubkal, which they measured and declared to be the highest peak in North Africa. Much of the documented information about this region comes from the physical data collected by the French, so it excludes relevant cultural or historical information.

The Meaning of Tamatert

There are several meanings of Tamatert that vary by family. One of these meanings is "exposed land to the sun"; the snow remains on the surrounding mountain tops, but melts in the village as it is exposed to the sun for the entire day. Another meaning of Tamatert is "an example." This meaning does not have a direct translation and might not have as significant a cultural meaning in English; however, it can be interpreted in a number of ways. Being an example or role model to another is one interpretation. As of 2009, there was no road from Imlil to Tamatert, only a footpath. Five years prior in 2004 a Swiss woman, Jacqueline Brandt, established the village's first known lodging for visitors: Douar Samra. Brandt built a traditional Amazigh house of pisé, wood, and stone with comfortable beds and toilets for visitors to Tamatert. The lodge became a part of the community, using bread baked by neighbors and involving locals in management. Since Douar Samra's opening, several other inns have opened in Tamatert, welcoming visitors to the village.

Tamatert Solstice

Tamatert is one of many villages in the town of Imlil, Marrakech, Morocco. It doesn't sit in the mountains where the snow sticks around, nor is it in the town center hub. Tamatert is its own getaway with its own story. The Solstice is a gathering held in the village to celebrate its own unique identity.



Tamatert, Imlil, Marrakesh, Morocco.

The Tamatert Solstice page shown in Figure 34 presents the description of a proposed marketing event Tamatert could host as a proof-of-concept. If the village organized an event in the future, they could advertise it on this page using photographs and descriptions.

Figure 34


Landing Page – Tamatert Solstice Page

The screenshot shows a landing page with a dark green header containing the text "TRAVEL TO TAMATERT" and a hamburger menu icon. Below the header, the main content area has a light beige background. On the left, the title "Tamatert Solstice" is followed by a paragraph of text describing the festival. On the right, there is a photograph of a mountain range at sunset. At the bottom of the page, a dark green footer contains the text "Tamatert, Imilil, Marrakesh, Morocco." A disclaimer is located above the footer.

TRAVEL TO TAMATERT ☰

Tamatert Solstice

Tamatert prides itself with their unique location situated right next to the Atlas Mountains. Picturesque views surround you every moment you are there, and if you're feeling up to the challenge you can even summit one of the peaks (including Mount Toubkail). Plan your trekking adventure in the month of June, and you'll be able to experience the Tamatert Solstice festival! On the summer solstice, where the sun is at its peak, the residents of Tamatert and those from all over, gather in the village to celebrate the hikers coming down the mountain. The festival pays homage to the cultural meaning the sun has to the people of the village. At this gathering you'll find food cooked by the wonderful auberge owners, prepared using ingredients from the local town center of Imilil. Owners will open up their home and kitchen, where you can witness the love and care they put into their inn. Additionally, many local shop owners and artisans will be at the festival showcasing their craft. Maybe you'll come across freshly made amlou, beautiful silver trinkets, and djellabas that will keep you warm! The solstice is the longest day of the year, so kids will be up until the very last possible minute. You can hear their laughter and playfulness throughout all hours of the day, and you might even join in on the fun! Once the festivals come to a close at sunset, you can make your way to one of the five auberges and enjoy a relaxing night of sleep. The Tamatert Solstice is an event you won't want to miss!



This event is purely a proof of concept. To date 5/2/2022, this is event is a recommendation proposed to the village from the IQP team at WPI that created this functional prototype.

Tamatert, Imilil, Marrakesh, Morocco.

The Auberges column includes a main page and an individual page for each of the five inns. The main page introduces the visitors to the five inns in Tamatert, with a brief overview of some of the activities and services that the inns provide. As shown in Figure 35, we also encouraged visitors to contact the inns directly to inquire and negotiate prices through WhatsApp.

Figure 35

Landing Page – The Auberges Page



Defined in our second opportunity statement in 4.1.2, tourists rely on trust and convenience when looking into booking methods. Hence, creating an easily accessible platform with everything Tamatert has to offer benefits both the customer and inn management. As we learned from our interviews with the inn managers, they would also prefer customers to interact with them directly instead of using a booking platform; the inns benefit more without the commission fees associated with third-party services. Each of the five inns has their own interactive image that contains the name of the inn underneath. Then, visitors can click on the inn to be brought to their respective pages.

Figure 36 shows the page for Auberge Atlas Tamatert as a sample of the standard format for each inn-specific page. We included a descriptive caption to provide a brief overview of the inn using storytelling, alongside the logo of the inn. This is then followed by links to the inn’s various social media pages, such as Facebook, Instagram, and official web pages. If the inn does not have an official website (e.g., Auberge Atlas Tamatert) then we included a review website to supplement the inn with additional information from other tourists’ experiences. We also described the services that are offered for each inn, alongside relevant photographs. These pages are meant to serve as a way for consumers to view all the relevant information and amenities the inns offer and direct them to the closest method of communication.

Figure 36

Landing Page – Auberges Atlas Tamatert Page

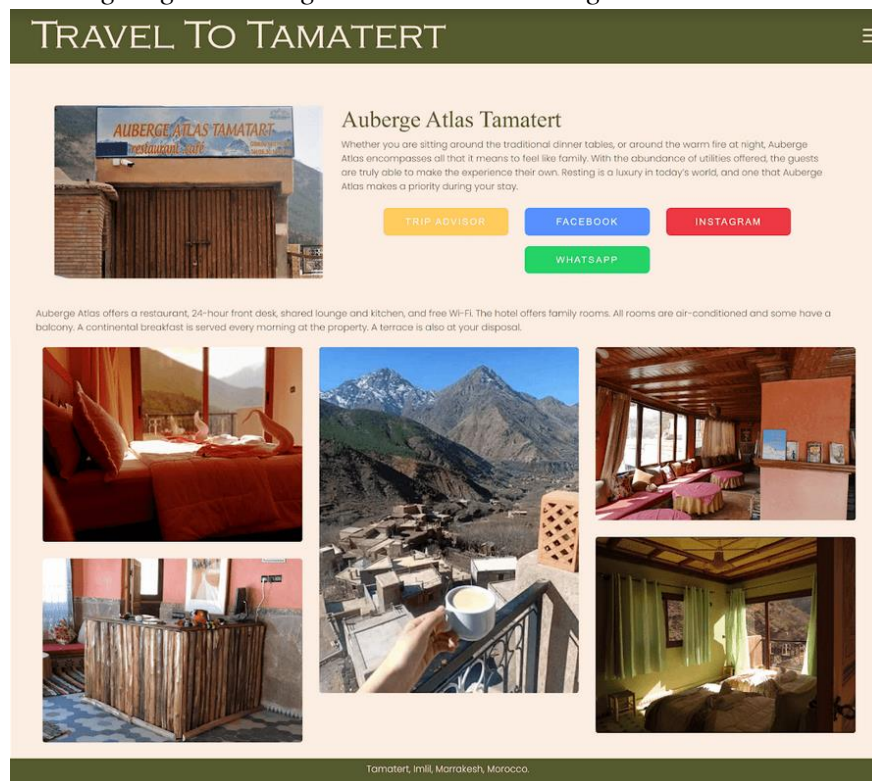


Figure 37 offers a way for tourists to share their experiences in Tamatert. The “Add a Review” feature on the right is a non-functional proof-of-concept that serves to showcase the vision of our guest book page being used as a digital word of mouth.

Figure 37

Landing Page- The Guest Book Page

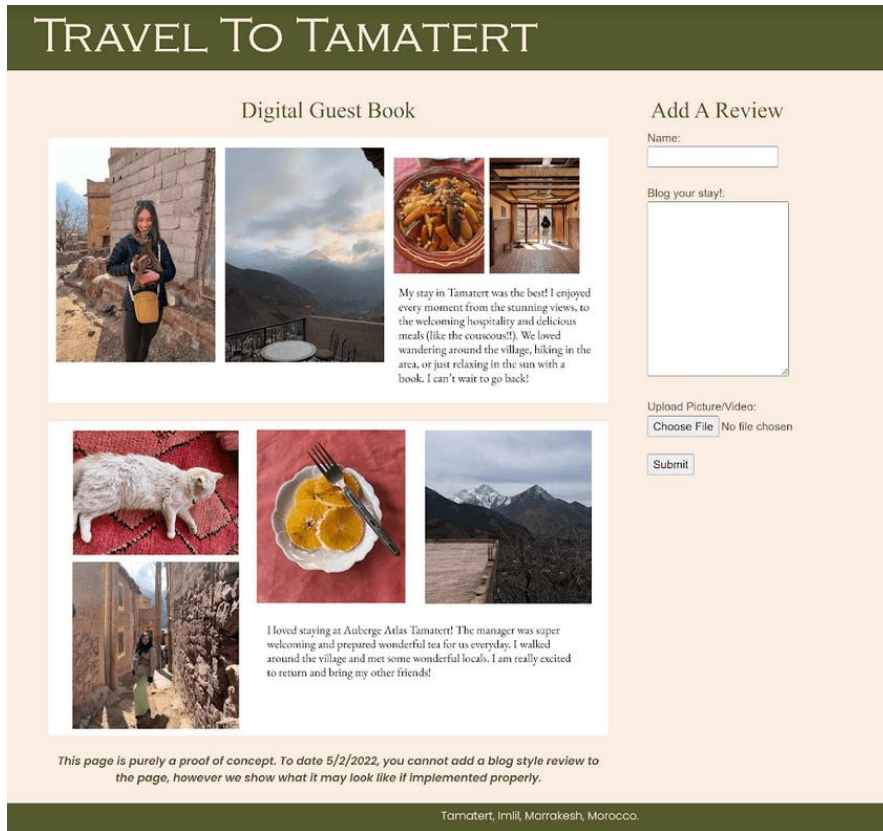


Figure 38 illustrates the location page that encompasses the many activities and attractions near Tamatert. We included an embedded Google Maps map for visitors to geographically visualize Tamatert in the context of the Imlil area. In addition, we positioned three interactive blocks underneath the map, where we included a picture and a short description of the attraction. By clicking each of the blocks, the user redirects to a website that explains the attraction in further detail.

Figure 38

Landing Page – Location Page


TRAVEL TO TAMATERT

Location


Tamatert is located in the High Atlas region of Morocco. Mount Toubkal, the highest peak in North Africa, is just a two day hike away.

An hour and 30 minutes from Marrakech and a ten minute drive from Imlil town center, Tamatert is an escape from the busy city life without traveling too far.

There are a lot of ways to get to Tamatert. From within Morocco you can get to Marrakech by train, taxi, bus, or private car. From there you can take a taxi or private car through beautiful, winding mountain roads to Tamatert. You can also drive yourself too (there's parking!).




Notable Places Nearby




Imlil Town Center

Bustling town center with hiking gear (ask your auberge for renting details), shops, restaurants, and cafes. As you walk through the streets you'll see shops selling local goods such as almonds, walnuts, and amlou as well as traditional Moroccan crafts.



Sidi Chamharouch

A religious shrine frequently visited by pilgrims.



Imlil Cascades

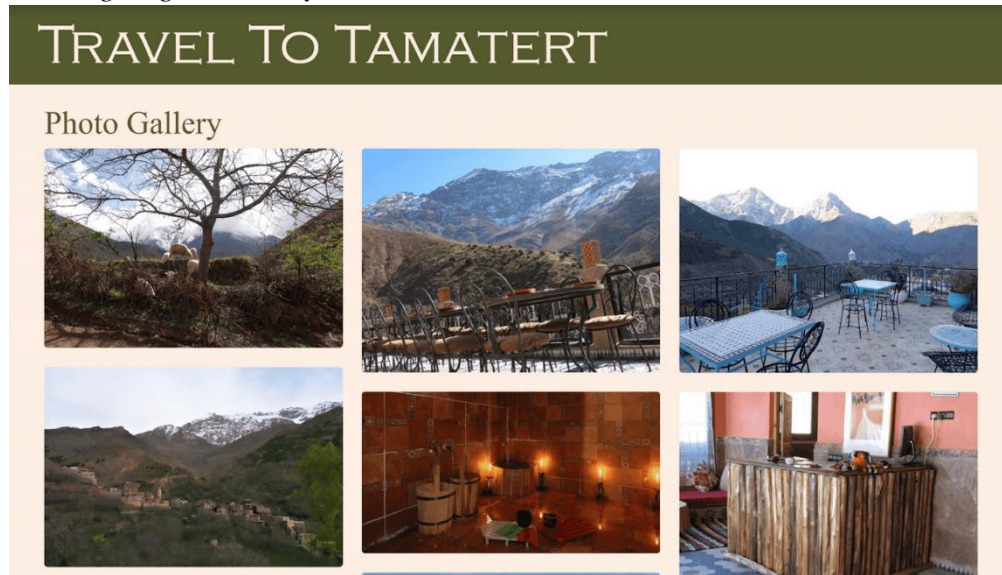
Just 15 minutes outside Imlil you can find this series of small waterfalls. On the relatively easy walk to the cascades one passes Amazigh villages, walnut groves, and apple trees.

Tamatert, Imlil, Marrakech, Morocco.

Lastly, we added a gallery page as seen in Figure 39 to supplement the remaining visual data that we collected regarding the inns of Tamatert and the village itself.

Figure 39

Landing Page – Gallery



5.2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LANDING PAGE

Focused User Testing for Landing Page

Although we created a working prototype of the landing page, we did not complete formal user testing sessions asking representatives to navigate the site. We recommend that for future iterations of this website there should be a proper testing protocol in place. This includes asking users to complete various tasks and ensure the functionality works as intended. Undergoing usability testing will reveal areas of confusion on the landing page, verify that every element works as intended, and uncover areas of improvement for the user experience. With provided feedback on the layout, flow, capabilities, and relevance of the site pages, the landing page can be an even more useful tool to market Tamatert.

Embed Social Media Posts

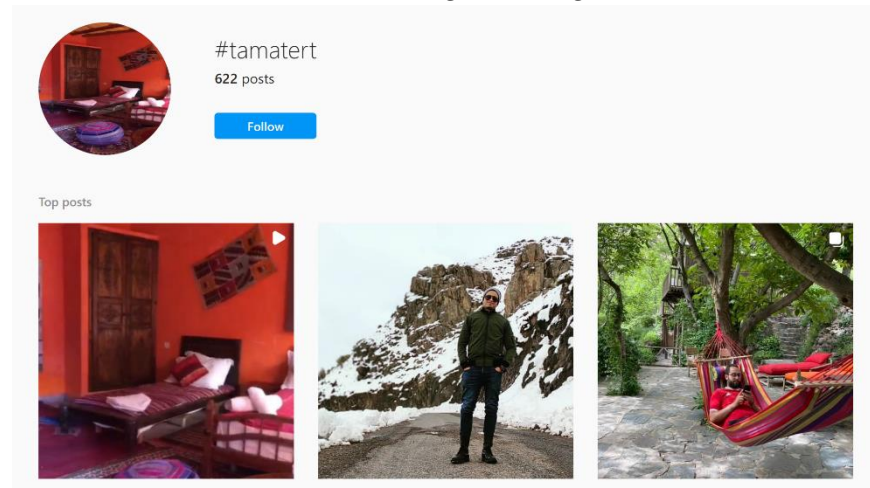
The Tamatert landing page should embed posts from either the unified Instagram social media page or a hashtag, such as #Tamatert, to showcase the village's social media presence. From our findings, we concluded that social media can be a main source of attraction to the Imlil region, as 29.4% of respondents indicated learning about the area from social media. Beyond

making an Instagram account that highlights Tamatert specifically and regularly, having this feed can stimulate further interest by showing Tamatert in real time. Figure 40 shows example posts found under #Tamatert on Instagram. This can also connect the landing page to its social media, further unifying the village branding.

Incorporate Direct Contact with Inn Management

Figure 40

Posts Under the Tamatert Hashtag on Instagram



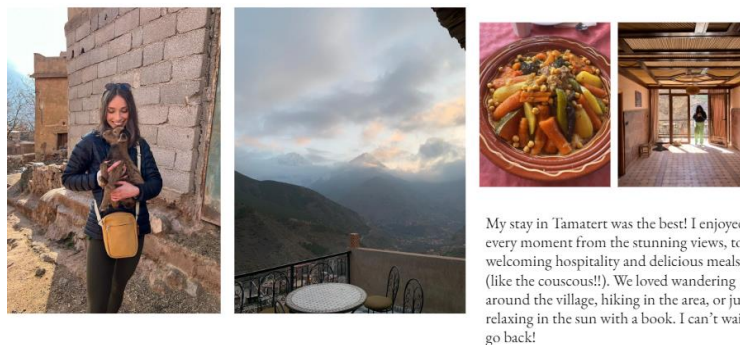
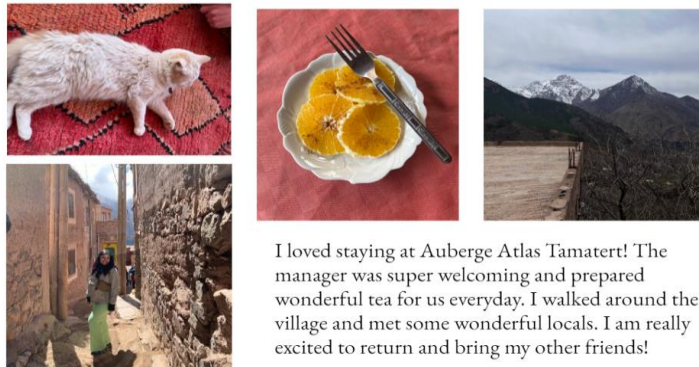
Our findings concluded that trust was a major factor for booking in the auberges of Tamatert for both customers and inn management. A total of 50% of survey respondents indicated that they learned about the Imlil area from family or friends. Furthermore, 28.9% of respondents indicated booking their current stay in Imlil directly through the manager. In our interviews, several inn managers described personal WhatsApp communication as a major source of booking. This is compared to online booking or using travel agencies and is particularly relevant post-pandemic. Additionally, the inns prefer this kind of booking as they can control the payment process, ensuring that 100% of the profit goes to them instead of facing charges from booking sites or travel agencies. By including an embedded WhatsApp chat function within each inn's page, rather than just a link, both customers and auberges can benefit. Customers can speak directly to inn managers about details of the inn, specifics of their stay, and potentially negotiate prices. Overall, this direct communication can establish trust between customers and inn managers.

Implement Blog-Style Reviews

During meetings with our sponsor, we found that trust in booking and travel is important. By utilizing blog-style reviews on the landing page (Figure 41), viewers can hear personal feedback from previous visitors to Tamatert.

Figure 41

Blog-Styled Review Proof-of-Concept



The pictures, videos, and descriptions of where they stayed and what they did in the area provide potential customers with additional information. The functional landing page included reviews as a proof-of-concept, and the functionality should be further implemented. This review page acts as digital word of mouth, encouraging viewers to book their own stay and experience Tamatert for themselves. Then, after their stay customers would be welcome to post a review of their own.

Include Keywords for Google Search Terms

We wanted to identify relevant search words and include them in the landing page to ensure the page appears on an internet search. This can increase traffic to the website, hopefully

encouraging more customers to travel to Tamatert. A sample list of keywords for online search engines include:

- Imlil
- Tamatert
- Marrakech
- High Atlas
- Hiking in Morocco
- Trekking in Morocco
- Mount Toubkal/ Mt. Toubkal
- Where to stay in Imlil?
- Where to stay in Tamatert?

Searches or cross-searches of the terms listed should be included in the landing page. The goal is that if potential tourists search any of these keywords on a search engine, then the landing page will be more likely to appear, as shown in Figure 42.

Figure 42

Google Ad Proof-of-Concept

Travel To Tamatert | Tamatert, Imlil, Marrakesh, Morocco
(Ad) www.travel-to-tamatert.com

Escape the city. Experience simplicity. Discover tradition. Located in the High Atlas region of Morocco, the village of Tamatert is home to five auberges that provides travelers with a place to stay near Mt. Toubkal.

5.3 DELIVERABLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

This chapter presented our deliverables for the project and the justifications for the branding booklet and functioning landing page. The branding booklet helps separate Tamatert from the Imlil area by identifying a unique brand identity that encompasses the village. Meanwhile, the functioning landing page is a simple and accessible platform where consumers

can access all the relevant information of the five inns to make a well-informed decision and a way to directly communicate with inn management.

In addition, we included recommendations for the inns of Tamatert, such as incorporating a unified brand identity and the implementation of a user-friendly landing page. These recommendations were presented to Dr. Zineb Rhajbal at the conclusion of this project. The list of recommendations will ultimately strengthen Tamatert as its own tourist destination and incentivize individuals visiting the greater Imlil area to stay there. Our recommendations can also be the foundation of further research towards increasing rural tourism in the village.

6.0 CONCLUSION

We accomplished our goal of helping to increase local tourism to Tamatert. In the first phase of our research, the team conducted an in-depth analysis on design principles and branding techniques. We also focused heavily on creating effective surveys and interview questions that provided us with useful information from both local tourists and the inn management. Once in Morocco, we put our background knowledge and preparation to use, as we traveled to the village of Tamatert and immersed ourselves in the environment. The valuable data we collected from our methods contributed to our design process in creating the two main deliverables: a branding booklet and a functioning landing page prototype. The branding booklet broke down how to use the logo and other branding aspects. The landing page encompasses the brand identity and has a general overview of what the page would look like on a functioning public domain. Along with the tangible deliverables, our team also made a series of recommendations for them, ideally leading to a more robust branding plan for the village.

Additional studies that can supplement our research should be considered for future work. Accessibility was an additional theme found from the emergent coding of our surveys. The drive and journey to Tamatert itself may not be feasible for certain audiences, such as those with young children, older individuals, and those with disabilities; therefore, we suggest a further study looking at the motivations of and ability to travel for Moroccans. More research into accessibility can also examine the infrastructure of Tamatert. This includes conducting a study into the physical accessibility of the village, such as the stairs, hills, slopes, and structures of the area. Furthermore, a financial review of the prices of the inns compared to other auberges in the Imlil area, as well as around Morocco is crucial to determine the competitive advantage Tamatert may have.

Our project work directly applied to the village of Tamatert; however, the research completed can be a framework to model branding plans for other areas in Morocco. Rural areas in the country hold a great deal of cultural significance and are home to many indigenous, close-knit communities. Understanding and responding to small businesses during a global pandemic is particularly valuable to improving the tourism industry and maintaining the traditions rural areas uphold. It is not just about the financial gain the tourism sector brings into Morocco, but

more so about helping people ensure a secure, sustainable income for their families and communities, while also showcasing the beauty and culture the area has to offer.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE INTERVIEW SCRIPT FOR INN MANAGERS

ORAL CONSENT FORM:

We are the Rural Tourism team from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, United States. We are conducting a series of interviews with the inn owners here in Tamatert to learn more about your inns and Tamatert as a travel destination. Our project goal is to help increase local tourism to Tamatert by identifying tourist desires, developing a brand identity, and creating a marketing/booking website roadmap for the village.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Please remember that your answers will remain anonymous. No identifying information will appear on the questionnaire or in any of the project reports or publications. Your participation is greatly appreciated, if interested, a copy of our results will be provided via email.

If you have any questions regarding our research, you can contact our team at gr-ruraltourism_d22@wpi.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Institutional Review Board at irb@wpi.edu.

Would it be okay to begin with our questions?

Do you have any questions for us before we begin?

Thank you for your help!

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INN OWNERS/MANAGERS:

1. Can you tell us about the inn?
 - a. How did you become the owner?
2. How do you primarily bring in customers?
 - a. How do you attract customers to the inn?
 - b. Could you tell us about how you currently market the inns?
 - i. Do you rely on word of mouth, online reviews, the current booking platform(s)?
 - ii. Do you keep track of how people come to the inns? If so, can you give us a rough estimate of the breakdown of people using platforms, word of mouth, etc.)
3. Do you have advertisements (both physical and electronic)? Electronic advertisements include instagram, facebook, etc.)
 - a. If yes, can we see them?
4. What aspect of your inn are you most proud of?
 - a. What do you want visitors to enjoy most from their stay?
5. What services and amenities do you offer?
 - a. Are those resources consistent and publicized?
 - b. What are the rates?
6. Would you be willing to collaborate with other inns (shared booking platforms, social media, logos, etc.)?
7. If you were to summarize Tamatert in a few sentences, what would it be?
 - a. What makes Tamatert unique? Rephrase question.

Note: Questions presented in this paper are in English but were conducted in Moroccan Arabic (Darija) during interviews for ease of communication.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE SURVEY SCRIPT FOR TOURISTS

CONSENT SCRIPT:

We are the Rural Tourism team from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, United States.

We are conducting a survey of tourist opinions and behaviors in Morocco to collect information about domestic Moroccan travel to increase rural tourism in Imlil, Morocco. This survey should only take about ten minutes. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Please remember that your answers will remain anonymous. No identifying information will appear on the questionnaire or in any of the project reports or publications. Your participation is greatly appreciated, if interested, a copy of our results can be provided via email.

If you have any questions regarding our research, you can contact our team at gr-ruraltourism_d22@wpi.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Institutional Review Board at irb@wpi.edu. Thank you for your help!

APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR TOURISTS:

1. Where are you from?

[Respondents choose one:]

- a. Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceïma
- b. L'Oriental
- c. Fès-Meknès
- d. Rabat-Salé-Kénitra
- e. Béni Mellal-Khénifra
- f. Casablanca-Settat
- g. Marrakech-Safi
- h. Drâa-Tafilalet
- i. Souss-Massa
- j. Guelmim-Oued Noun
- k. Laâyoune-Sakia El Hamra
- l. Dakhla-Oued Ed-Dahab

2. Do you travel within Morocco often?

[Respondents choose one:]

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Not Often
- d. never

3. If you have, what is the reason for your travel?

[Respondents choose (one or more):]

- a. Vacation
- b. Visiting Family and/or Friends

-
- c. Business
 - d. A specific activity
 - e. Other (text box that allows people to explain more)
4. How did you learn about Imlil (and/or surrounding villages)?
- [Respondents choose (one or more):]
- a. Family or Friend
 - b. Advertisement
 - c. Social Media
 - d. Other (text box allows people to explain more)
5. Please explain your reasoning or motivation for coming to Imlil
- [Respondents explain in provided textbox:]
6. Have you stayed in the area more than once? If yes, state how many
- [Respondents choose one:]
- a. Yes
 - i. Textbox where exact number is entered
 - b. No, only once
7. How did you book your stay?
- [Respondents choose one or more from:]
- a. Booking websites
 - b. Travel agencies
 - c. Through the owner
 - d. Other (text box allows people to explain more)
8. Why did you choose that booking method?
- [Respondents explain in provided textbox:]

9. Why did you choose the auberge you did? What characteristics of the auberge were attractive?

[Respondents explain in provided textbox:]

10. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being definitely would not and 5 being definitely would): Would you recommend this area to other people looking to travel?

a. Answer is in the form of a sliding bar

11. If you don't mind, please explain your reasoning from above

[Respondents explain in provided textbox:]

12. What activities have you done in the area? If you don't mind, tell us your favorite thing about your trip.

[Respondents explain in provided textbox:]

13. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being very uncomfortable and 5 being very comfortable): How comfortable did you feel during your stay?

a. Answer is in the form of a sliding bar

14. If you don't mind, please explain your reasoning from above

[Respondents explain in provided textbox:]

APPENDIX E: INN MANAGER INTERVIEW RESULTS

AUBERGE ATLAS TAMATERT

Manager: Hassan

Tell us about the inn and how you became manager:

- Why people came to Imlil: religious shrine (Shamharoush)
- People come from Marrakech to see the waterfalls about 15-20 minutes from the center of Imlil
- Hassan started in 2017 → closed for a year due to covid
- The owner of the inn started the project, owner lives in Casablanca (does business stuff there)
- The owner is originally from Tamatert/Imlil
- Start off as an apartment, became an inn

Bringing in customers:

- The service → the way they treat people
- People come and like it, then they pass it on via word of mouth
- 65% of booking is through word of mouth, the rest is booking.com
- People to the inn for 1 night, but then they realize they want to do more and hike
- Inn offers services and guides

- Someone in the family does the business and marketing stuff for advertisements
- Keep inn traditional
- Instagram page

Proud of:

- People come to the inn to feel rested and leave that way as well
- They try to use local resources (food), thinking about changing tables and chairs from industrial built to handmade

Services:

- Lodging
- Food included
- Tour guides
- Gear stored in garage
- Mule excursion
 - Plan a 5 day-7 day hiking trip
 - Buy ingredients → will send somebody with them to actually cook it

Rates:

-
- The longer you stay the cheaper it gets
 - Highest price is 400 per room
 - When they have groups they charge per person
 - Gear is not included in price (spikes around 100 dirham)
 - Normally only breakfast is include
 - One person reserves room → breakfast and dinner
 - Two people → just breakfast
 - Certified guides: 600 dirham per day (fake ones for 400)
 - Mules are 210 dirham
 - Sending person to cook is 250 dirham

Shared platform:

- Would be willing to have a shared platform

Tamatert:

- Traditional place with traditional infrastructure
- Quiet and magical

KASBAH IMLIL

Manager

Tell us about the inn and how you became manager:

- Started in 2012
- Manager started just 6 months ago
- Started by someone from the region
- Lodge Imlil (another inn) is owned by same owners

Bringing in customers:

- Through good treatment and services
- Have Facebook and Instagram
- Kasbah Imlil website
- Pages within booking.com rather than their own independent site?
- 5% use booking.com the rest is word of mouth
- Precovid it was 80-90% booking.com
- Booking.com takes 20% of their commission

Services:

- Everything is traditional, the view is beautiful
- Offer tea
- People can choose room
- People can contact through whatsapp and they can get pictures of the rooms and choose

- Services are customized and things aren't really offered ahead of time
- They come, sit down, have a talk to decide prices, what they want to do while here
- They tell people history of the town
- Work with people in the center to get equipment

Shared platform:

- Would like to collaborate with other inns on a platform -- especially if it won't take a lot of profit

Tamatert

- (word means a "sign")
- The word has a history/story
- Used to be only 5 places
- A guy had a gun and scared everyone away
- Wife conspired to kill him, hired a sign to kill him
- He loves this town and what it means to him
- Only 7 families spread throughout

LES JARDINS DU TOUBKAL

Manager

Tell us about the inn and how you became manager:

- He is/was a local guide with his brother
- They started a transportation business which became the basis for starting with the auberge

Bring in customers:

- The treatment of clients
- The views from the inn and in the village
- Toubkal being the highest peak in North Africa made it the perfect place

Marketing:

- They have a website you can book stay on
- Instagram and Facebook
- They also host on booking.com
- Word of mouth from people who come stay and enjoy it
- Majority of the customers come from somehow booking online
- They do it all on the internet/digitally

Proud of:

- The rooms have views of the mountains

Services:

- If someone is coming to stay, they prepare to walk people down to the waterfalls
- They organize trips for visitors depending on season (summer is busy with hikes/treks/etc)
- 60 Eu to include lunch
- They work with a shop in Imlil for renting gear

Shared platform:

- Yes they are willing to be on any platform available
- Booking.com lowers rates the more customers who book your business
- Expedia trip
- Imlil Accommodation

Tamatert:

- People come for the views, and the views speak for itself

HIBA LODGE

Owner

Tell us about the inn and how you became manager:

- She used to work at Dour Samra and decided to start her own business
- She bought the land and built her inn over 8 years
- Douar owner helped her a lot with ideas, finances, etc

Bring in customers:

- Website was the primary source of bringing in customers
- www.hibalodge.com
- Didn't work as well as hoped
- Started hosting on booking.com

Marketing:

- Google maps
- Trip advisor
- Facebook and Instagram
- Good reviews
- Give out business cards
- 30% customers from word of mouth,
- 70% is mixture of people who come across the inn just by being in the area, and those who book online booking.com

Proud of:

- Proud of the fact that she built it over 8 years
- Made of rock, very traditionally Moroccan
- Wants customers to enjoy the place and come back

Services:

- Helps people with trekking
- Organizes transportation
- WhatsApp organization with drivers
- Take people up the mountain
- Make the trip easier on customers
- 40Eu for room and breakfast
- Lunch and dinner are extra
- They send a picnic for those trekking
- Gets the gear through Imlil

Shared platform:

- Yes she would be willing to be on the platform

Tamatert:

- Beautiful town/village
- Away from the city noise
- The weather is nice and the sun shines right on the village
- Her life started here

APPENDIX F: INFORMAL INTERVIEW RESULTS

Informal interview about the meaning and history of Tamatert with a village native.

- “The exposed land to the sun”
 - The snow stays on the peaks but melts in towns as they are exposed to the sun all day, (it rises in the east)
 - This is one meaning but other families believe there are many more meanings
- “An example” is another meaning
 - This may not make sense to us but it does culturally
 - We can interpret this however we want
 - Tamatert = “an example”
- The old Amazigh “tribe” → started the village with 3, now 7, families and everyone knows each other
- Advancement of services (?)
- People had to walk long distances from Imlil and come back for products
- colonizers/French brought the road here, used it to come by train, climbed Toubkal and declared it the highest mountain in North Africa
- One of the French discovered a cave and formed it into a refuge
 - Refuge is upwards in mount Toubkal
 - Can find it on a map - about 3000m up
- We look at the catalog they have on the mountain but it's more physical, not about history or culture
 - Colonizers stripped area of its history and meaning

APPENDIX G: SAMPLE RAW DATA FROM TOURIST SURVEY RESULTS

Table 4

Sample Raw Data from Tourist Survey Results

Q2	Q3	Q4	Q4_5 TEXT	Q5	Q5_4 TEXT	Q6
Where are you from? Selected Choice	Do you travel within Morocco often?	If you have, what is the reason for your travel? - Selected Choice	If you have, what is the reason for your travel? - Other - Text	How did you learn about Imlil (and/or surrounding villages)? - Selected Choice	How did you learn about Imlil (and/or surrounding villages)? - Other - Text	Please explain your reasoning or motivation for coming to Imlil.
Marrakech-Safi	Always	Other	culture and tradition to visit natural scenery	Family or Friend,Other	wife 10 years ago from here	scenery, travel many places
Casablanca-Settat	Sometimes	Vacation		Family or Friend,Social Media		Weather , discovery
Casablanca-Settat	Always	A Specific Activity,Other	Sports, marathon, trail	Family or Friend,Advertisement, Social Media		Hiking with company
Casablanca-Settat	Never	Other	doesn't travel	Family or Friend		discover the area
Casablanca-Settat	Sometimes	Vacation		Social Media		To rest
Casablanca-Settat	Always	Vacation,Other	camping	Family or Friend,Other	has friends in marrakech	his friends recommended, and he feels good and
Casablanca-Settat	Always	Vacation,Business		Family or Friend		Discover nature
Casablanca-Settat	Always	Vacation		Family or Friend		Nature, mountains and the weather
Rabat-Salé-Kénitra	Always	Vacation		Other	Toubkal	Unplanned trip
Casablanca-Settat	Sometimes	A Specific Activity,Other	more interested in international, hiking too, but after covid went domestic	Social Media		toubjal, everyone says it's amazing, likes hiking started with other summits
Marrakech-Safi	Always	Vacation,Visiting Family and/or Friends		Family or Friend		Leisure and close by

APPENDIX H: SAMPLE OF INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION/AUTOETHNOGRAPHY ENTRY

Drive to Tamatert:

- The view was surreal, I'd never seen anything like it
 - The roads were winding and the guard rails were very very tiny
 - We could've taken a tumble down the mountain easily
 - I wished my camera could pick up how beautiful the sights were, didn't do it justice
- In awe, can't even express what I was seeing around me
 - The only sound around were goats and roosters and the call to prayer when it was time
 - The village almost blends into the mountains, but inside anywhere we went there are bursts of color and beautiful wood/bamboo
 - We were greeted with hospitality everywhere we went
 - o offered tea and biscuits before couscous, the food was delicious and the service was so great

Imlil:

- Seeing the peaks up close was insanely beautiful
- The greenery around us and the mountains around was crazy
- The stream water was so clear
- Lots of people eating in cafes
- Streets lined with places to rent trekking/skiing equipment
- Baskets of fresh nuts outside of the shop that makes their own amlou
- The town was small but lively, donkeys in the street and the smell of food all around

→ *Atlas Tamatert*

- Eating area is a traditional Moroccan living room style, colorful couches and decorations with an incredible window view of the mountains
- The staff was incredibly kind,

→ *Dour Samra*

- It was like an oasis within the village
- Cobblestone walls, a treehouse and a gorgeous chess table

Tamatert:

- The air was cold but fresh

-
- The chairs had a pop of color – yellow and orange – to contrast the natural colors of the outdoors
 - We didn't even have the chance to interview but were still offered tea and biscuits
 - Chairs were woven, maybe handmade

→ *Kasbah Imlil*

- Simply knocked on the door and were offered to come in
- Walked into high ceilings and led to a dark, quiet, but beautiful room with a gorgeous table

- Very traditional

→ *Les Jardins du Toubkal*

- Blue couches in such a cozy atmosphere
- Also offered us tea and biscuits before the interview and while we were waiting

→ *Hiba Lodge*

- Inn owner talked to us on the phone which was so kind of her
- Made sure we had tea and biscuits

APPENDIX I: LOGO SURVEY CONSENT SCRIPT

We are the Rural Tourism team from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, United States.

We are completing a social science research project with the goal of increasing rural tourism in Tamatert, Morocco through the creation of a brand identity. We are conducting a survey to test our logo designs for the village. This survey should only take about five minutes. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Please remember that your answers will remain anonymous. No identifying information will appear on the questionnaire or in any of the project reports or publications. Your participation is greatly appreciated, if interested, a copy of our results can be provided via email.

If you have any questions regarding our research, you can contact our team at gr-ruraltourism_d22@wpi.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Institutional Review Board at irb@wpi.edu. Thank you for your help!

APPENDIX J: LOGO SURVEY QUESTIONS

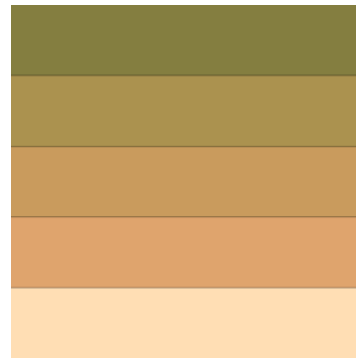
1. Choose the option that best describes you:
 - a. I live in Tamatert
 - b. I have visited Tamatert
 - c. I have heard of Tamatert, but I have not been there
 - d. I have never been to Tamatert or heard about Tamatert
2. Which color scheme better evokes a calm feeling?

[Respondents choose one:]

Palette A



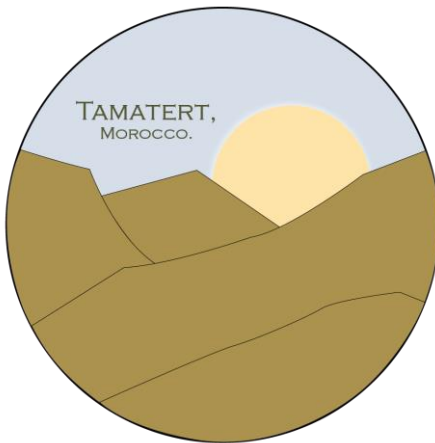
Palette B



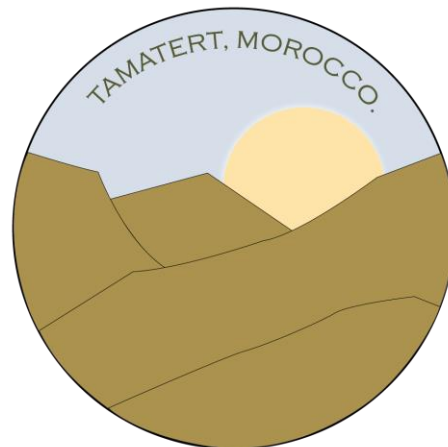
3. Which text positioning is more representative of a welcoming brand?

[Respondents choose one:]

Block Text



Rounded Text



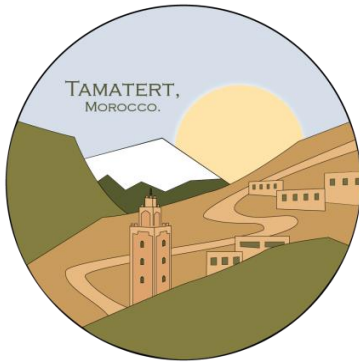
4. Which logo coloring is more aesthetically pleasing?

The choices of this question were dependent on the answers to the previous two. The four possible combinations for this question are shown separately below.

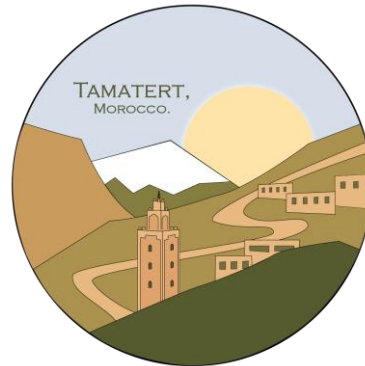
[Respondents choose one logo dependent on the two displayed figures:]

Palette A / Block Text

1



2

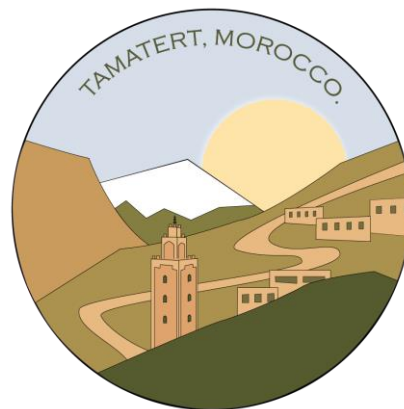


Palette A / Rounded Text

1



2

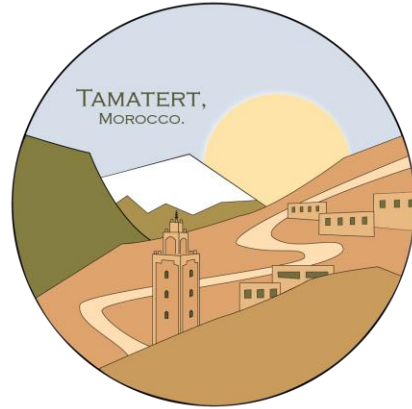


Palette B / Block Text

1



2



Palette B / Rounded Text

1



2



5. Please select your favorite of the following logos:

[Respondents choose one:]

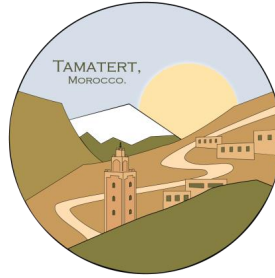
1



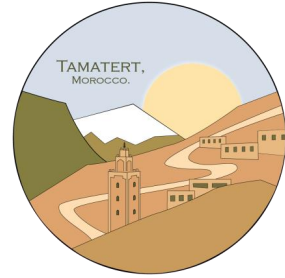
2



3



4



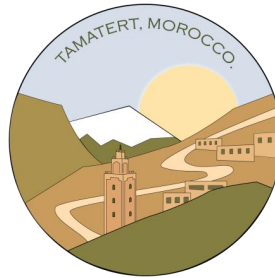
5



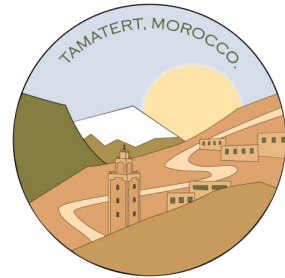
6



7



8



6. If you wish to provide further feedback or suggestions, please do so here:

[Respondents can optionally include feedback in a provided textbox]

APPENDIX K: SAMPLE RAW DATA FROM LOGO SURVEY RESULTS

Table 5

Sample Raw Data from Logo Survey Results

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Choose the option that best describes you:	Which color scheme better evokes a calm feeling?	Which text positioning is more representative of a welcoming brand?	Which logo coloring is more aesthetically pleasing?	Please select your favorite of the following logos:	If you wish to provide further feedback or suggestions, please do so here:
I have heard of Tamatert, but I have not been there	Color Palette B	Position B	Design A	IM_4I1pDB06mEjYdE	
I have heard of Tamatert, but I have not been there	Color Palette A	Position A	Design B	IM_3PpO2zG8cMZr3xA	
I have heard of Tamatert, but I have not been there	Color Palette A	Position B	Design A	IM_8GqhLrHI11CIMUS	I like the green! The logos with more brown don't stand out as well
I have heard of Tamatert, but I have not been there	Color Palette B	Position A	Design A	IM_8GqhLrHI11CIMUS	
I have heard of Tamatert, but I have not been there	Color Palette A	Position A	Design B	IM_8GqhLrHI11CIMUS	
I have never been to Tamatert or heard about Tamatert	Color Palette A	Position B	Design A	IM_3PpO2zG8cMZr3xA	
I have visited Tamatert	Color Palette B	Position A	Design A	IM_0ia74anwR7YzIMG	you're doing great!
I have heard of Tamatert, but I have not been there	Color Palette A	Position B	Design A	IM_0ia74anwR7YzIMG	

APPENDIX L: PROJECT TIMELINE

Table 6

Project Timeline

Task	Week								
	PQP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Design Qualtrics Interview Survey									
Produce Inn Owners Interview Questions									
Collecting Data (Interviews, Surveys)									
Codify Survey Results									
Create Deliverables									
Produce Final Report									