

## **DIFFERENTIATION ON VIRTUAL CUSTOMER CARE TOOLS AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FACTOR IN BRAZILIAN RESORTS**

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*The Brazilian tourism industry experienced huge transformations in its structure from the 1990's on, due to big investments in luxury and super luxury hotels. This kind of lodging has as strategy the differentiation by offering unique services and experiences to the guests. Thus, the virtual customer care tools can contribute to compose the guest's loyalty from the differentiation of the services given to him by the resort. This is a descriptive-qualitative study, made from a survey in which it was analyzed the virtual customer care tools' performance found in 47 big luxury and super luxury resorts operating in Brazil. The main results indicate low use of the available virtual customer care tools. The most wide used were: email, electronic form for submission, auto-service and map of the site. On the other hand, the less used tools were: automatic e-mail answer, FAQ, chat, site personalization, discussion groups and video conference; and thus, the last four even were identified in the surveyed resorts. Also, it could be evidenced that even the resorts classified with high performance, underuse the virtual customer care tools, what seems to not contribute to offer a unique and differentiated communication experience to their current customers, as well as to their prospects.*

**KEY WORDS:** resort, virtual guest service, competitive advantage.