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The Carlson Company and Global Corporate Citizenship: The Protection of Children in the Travel and Tourism Industry

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Executive summary

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- *Marilyn Carlson Nelson is CEO of Carlson Companies, a global marketing, travel, and hospitality company*
- *Her first challenge to Carlson's new corporate commitment was to protect children from sexual exploitation in the tourism industry.*
- *Carlson Companies had been developing a very promising hotel property in a lucrative area of Costa Rica when new information came to light that the area was notorious for child trafficking and prostitution.*

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- *Carlson Companies, under Marilyn's leadership, signed in 2004 the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism*
- *As part of its obligations under the Code, Carlson Companies carries out a corporate ethical policy against the commercial sexual exploitation of children.*
- *According to this policy, Carlson Companies trains personnel to identify traffickers and sex tourists, provides information to tourists using its services, and takes other preventive measures.*

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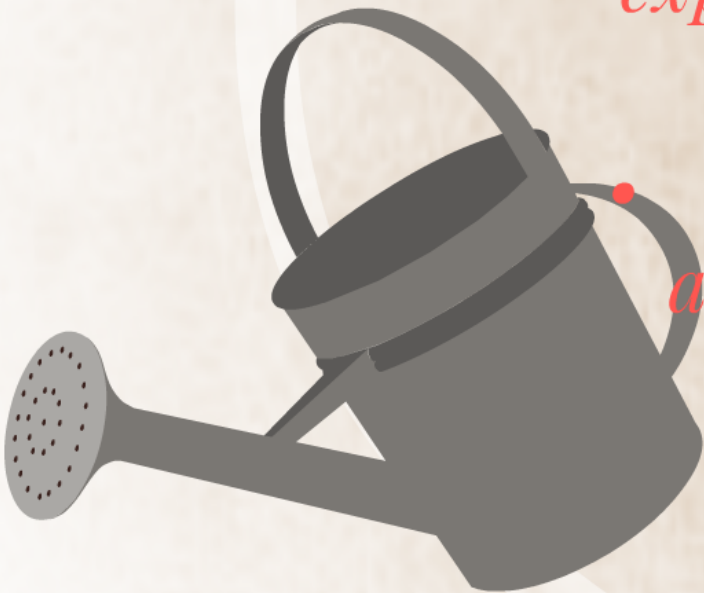
- A few years after signing the Code, Carlson Companies began an expansion project in Costa Rica with a Regent hotel located in Papagayo.*
- Costa Rica is a country well known for problems with child sexual exploitation*
- Consequently, some executives at Carlson Companies feared expanding the Regent franchise into Costa Rica because it might conflict with their commitment to the Code*

Statement of the Problem

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Advantages:

- *Highly profitable*
- *Provide basis for future expansion throughout Latin America*
- *Opportunity to serve as a role model in the travel and tourism industry*



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Disadvantages:

- *Compromising commitment of the code*
- *Risk reputation*
- *Legislative fears*

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2. Links of the problem

- *Code of conduct for protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism signed by the CEO, Marilyn Carlson in 2004*

Outcome of Marriot Scandal

- *Blacklisted by Swedish national pension fund*

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Decision facing the company:

Move forward with the project potentially risk compromising its commitment to the code and to eliminating the sexual exploitation of children? OR abandon the project and potentially lucrative business opportunity?