IAC17 Information xChange Session

Co-creation & Strategic Relationships Collaboration

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Section 1: Co-creation – How are you utilizing collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders?

Your customers are everybody – suppliers, vendors, etc. People who push you. Challenge you.

Q1. How and why creation of the brand narrative

Q2. How every organization function must evolve to meet the demands of the co-create economy

Q3. How “enterprise evangelism” delivers a sustainable competitive advantage

You have to frame the problem correctly. You have to look at the scenario with different lenses. Don’t build on potentially flawed assumptions. Getting feedback from your channels, associates and those not invested in you are great ways to challenge your thinking.
Strategic Relationships: In the co-create economy, the concept of customer includes everyone who experiences the value your organization generates. Employees, suppliers, investors and the media contacts, in addition to traditional consumers.

Based on this, who are the people in your “360 degree universe” that can you co-create with?

List of A, B and C people

A. They get you – intimate. You don’t have to impress these people.
B. Not as intimate, but you have longevity with.
C. Have potential. Still have to learn. Either have to move up or move out.

What are these people’s behaviors that will help you get to your goals? Answers will depend on your individual perspective and whether you are a supplier or planner.

“A” Contacts

Meeting Professional:

- Senior VP, Staff, i.e., immediate team – you know them so well and intimately
- Investment banker, director, core team – depend on them for assistance in advocating and creating what you are trying to do
- Compliance – partnering in what you can and can’t do (e.g.: regulations)
- Internal clients and end-users – direct feedback
- Core business unit members – sales, finance, legal. Global Sales Officers from the supplier side – where you don’t have to be bogged down.
- Internal stakeholders – see above. They know where you are going. NSO – GSO – ALHI contact. They get it.
- Webmaster – outside facing
- Industry experts – not just in your industry

Hotel:

- Loyal customer or supplier (e.g.: a client that has been coming for 10 years – they can provide quick and non-filtered feedback)
- Core team and senior leaders (F&B Director, Controller) – exchange information with them.
- Culture and HQ department heads – must understand hotel, brand and the customers you are trying to get
- Peers who we are not currently doing business with – get them in a room and ask why
- Community – must feed them information to be advocates. (e.g.: CVBs, governor of FL, ALHI)
- Technology experts – find a niche player that can quickly move. Tech should help you leapfrog innovation.
- People with a creative mindset and willing to collaborate
“B” Contacts

Meeting Professional:

- NSOs, GSOs, CEOs, suppliers, senior leadership
- Risk analysis (eg: legal) – to protect you and provide guidance
- Production team – behind the scenes working for you and making you look better

Hotel:

- CVBs, local charities, competing peers. (eg: ALHI – what is the pulse of our hotels out there? Clients – why do you stay with us? Anything that will prevent us doing business in future?)
- Industry associations (eg: MPI, Smart Meetings, PCMA) – put you in an environment and put you into those relationships
- Intermediaries – have to know which the good ones are

“C” Contacts

Meeting Professional:

- Internal customers (e.g.: General Manager) - should really drive the ship on how you sell
- Front line employee(s) that get it – anticipate your needs. Empower these people to “move them up.”
- First time user/customer

Hotel:

- Owners (sometimes) – they may not completely get it
- Distant guests and first time user/customer
- Long-term associates in company – identify those who might not be a good fit or willing to change. Partner with similar brand company – are they collaborative now and in the future?
- Event Manager

Section 2: Is Your Brand Identity out of Control?

Think of brand as “what do people say about your product when you leave the room?”

The goal is to imagine addressing service issues in real time vs. waiting for surveys to come in that tell you about the past.

In the current state, we learn our shortcomings. However, we cannot address the problems in real time...a missed opportunity?

- Think about the different touch points you have to address issues in real time
- With this in mind, what are the predictive service touch points you could implement to address service issues in real time? Describe your tactics. Disruptive innovation.
- How can you control your brand identity in a predictable fashion?
• Instead of asking “How was your stay?” Ask: “What was one thing we could have done differently?”
• Take one piece of your business and dial it slightly to make it a little different

Exercise: Identify real time ways to improve brand identity in our industry:

Know your brand first in order to be able to deliver.

• Really starts before groups get on-site. Importance of transparency – the “why?” – Infusing feeling, personal touches to innovation/technology before they arrive.
• Timing of information – key to hotel – why we need info, and why getting the information early impacts the stay.
• Real Time – both planners and hotels to check social media while on-site. Monitoring this is critical. The opportunity to doing something different and unique is huge.
• Asking open-ended questions – hotels are trained to ask guests. From line employees all the way up the chain to look for and address issues in real time.
• Revamp pre-con and replace it with smaller real time pre-cons. (e.g.: 2,000 gala – planner meets with executive chef and their team 2 hours before or daily “pre-con” the day before)
• Real-time recognition - a system in place to recognize great experience.
• Executive leadership engaged throughout the program (e.g.: Management walk about – engaged and involved. Not just management, but even bellmen and front line staff.) Recreating responsibilities with staff to addressing problems in real time.
• On the association side: sponsors and exhibitors - they are an extension of our brands.
• Charitable organizations we partner with are a part of our brand as they go out and talk about us.
• Conference Services Managers – fight for them. They can win repeat business even more so than a sales person and, therefore, a brand extension.
• Instead of a commercial of the hotel on the TV – ask questions such as “How can we make your stay better?” which provides then and there “feedback.”
• Check-in experience – changing it and being proactive. Getting a call 5 minutes after you have checked in - NO! Is there a way 3-4 hours later to receive a text – “how is everything going? Do you need anything?” Give an opportunity for them to experience the property a little.
• Surveys when they get into the room asking them about their room. Using technology is important, however, it has to be the way the guest wants to interact making it easy for them.
• Making sure everyone is on the same page with your brand so that it is not only consistent - it is also real time.
• “Hugging your customers” before they check-in and distinguishing between transient and groups, VIPs, speakers, etc.
• Planners want it to succeed just as much. Communication is key. (e.g.: Dietary needs - not just “gluten free.” Be specific of how it might affect that customer. Offer to meet with the chef beforehand.)
• Technology is great, however, there is a cost-benefit issue too.
• Guest Services messaging systems– interacting directly with the hotel. Introduce this pre-arrival.
- An app – with a survey sent two days before they leave. Use real time messaging platforms that guests know how to use and are familiar with. Consider hotel/client co-survey with incentives to complete.
- App messaging with the hotels where both attendees and planners can share feedback during program.
- Create Simple surveys to increase participation.
- Survey immediately post sale or part of turnover process – sales to CS.
- Experiences – greeters/people who can get a pulse on the group and solve problems immediately.
- How do we make it easy to collect data and how do we leverage technology to do so? (e.g.: when sign on WIFI/Survey?)
- Taking action right away/Tweets – must be able to respond right away.
- Local Measure – company – Geo. Circle – anything that is posted in that geographical area, it is collected in one area – can be viewed. Hotels can then respond.
- Zingle app - used to text message guests while they are in-house

In Summary, to be more effective at improving Brand:

- The closer you are to gathering data, the quicker you are to respond to it. (e.g.: Tablet in lobby that asks you how is your stay so far – smiley face, frown face. Feedback to hotel and response time – 3 minutes.)
- Specificity of the question is paramount to identifying and addressing the problem.
- Remember “figure 8”. Customer is always evaluating. Identify pain points throughout this process. What are you doing that makes things difficult for the guest? Eliminating something that nobody cares about and that does not add value. Go back to each stage to identify pain points! Go back to teams and solve just one! From there, tackle the next one.
- Remember, you don’t own your brand. Your customer does.
What do people do on a consistent basis who you want to co-create with? Someone who understands the supply chain. People who look at the picture different.

Think of 3-5 individual behaviors of people in your company that embodies the above. What is it they do that makes you feel they bring perspective? Relationships that advance your goals and help you think differently about your business:

- Creative Disruptors look at things differently. They have the ability to change behaviors, putting people in different mindset. Ask the right questions. Have decisive and collaborative insight. Some people are more open-minded and open to change, others don’t want to.
- Having people with diverse experiences bring a lot of value and more perspectives to challenge the status quo.
- Individuals who can recognize the areas for improvement. They can be more open to receptive to feedback – embraces constructive feedback.
- Effective communicators – don’t talk in generalities – get more specifics. Tell me why. How are we going to get there? Specificity drives credibility.
- Proactive and passionate people who striving for excellence
- Detail-oriented people who able to orchestrate
- Authentic people with a communal mindset
- Travel partners that mentor the generations and are doing well. Ask them what they are doing.
- What processes and behaviors do we have in place to create memorable experiences?
- Going outside the industry and capturing new connections and ideas to bring back – having that mindset.

Also, the culture of company will influence your brand. Training your team and having systems in place to align your brand objectives to culture.

Talking to people who have no idea about your business can have a 30,000 ft. view and ask questions that we have never thought of. For example, some hotels have owners in different industries or have members who can drive change and provide honest feedback.