

Thoughts from the Top



featuring

Sooho Choi

Global Head of Travel & Hospitality

Sooho has 20+ years within the consulting industry, the past 2+ years with Publicis Sapient as the Global Head of Travel & Hospitality. He believes our client-centric and outcome-focused approach paired with best-in-class solutions for each engagement drives results and profitable growth for each business that we serve. Sooho is located in the Greater Chicago Area.



Given the major impact COVID has had on the Travel and Hospitality industry, what have you seen companies within this industry prioritizing as they look to reopen?

First and foremost, the health and safety of both crew and customer alike are of utmost importance and is the primary focus as the industry looks to recover. At the same time, the business reality is that travel and hospitality brands need access to substantial cash and credit lines to survive through this pandemic. This crisis has lasted longer than we could have initially anticipated. Having sufficient liquidity will allow these businesses to invest in their future now and ultimately come out stronger. Lastly, there is a strong emphasis on communicating with clarity.

Companies need to be adaptive to the different demand pattern of their consumers, however it is imperative that the message is clear and communicated efficiently.

If you take a look at some of the larger industries in the Travel and Hospitality space, we have seen a few major shifts and some promising recovery trends. Airlines and airports have focused on cost cutting while in parallel offsetting lost revenues with a shift to cargo and leisure business. China is well on its way towards recovery, particularly with hotel demand. Perhaps most significantly, restaurants have seen a significant overhaul in the ways they engage with customers with the vast majority of revenues coming through digital channels – kiosks, touchless, mobile, etc. – particularly in the QSR segment.



How do you see Salesforce playing a major role in the recovery of the Travel and Hospitality industry?

We see a tremendous opportunity in the B2B and the B2C world. The robust capabilities in marketing, mobile and engagement that Salesforce offers are well suited for the needs of a post-COVID world. In terms of B2C, we also see Salesforce's Customer 360 come into play with their own CDP and Audience Studio. This offering provides the ability to do real-time offers and journeys specifically mapped to what the customers are truly looking for. We have seen an uptick in staycations and local getaways, therefore we need to enable our clients to see the opportunity to

use marketing cloud to target and engage with these individuals in the correct way.

If you look at the restaurant and delivery ecosystem, we have identified ways through communities to connect restaurant partners to end customers. Restaurants understand the use of third parties for their delivery system is important to their business, but it goes beyond ensuring the food gets from point A to point B. It is about ensuring that we are connecting an ecosystem from end to end.



What is one innovative way you have seen clients leverage Salesforce in creating more customer engagement during this time?

We have been working with a large global hotel chain on their recovery efforts centered on the customer experience. This specific client has an in-house custom-built CDP. One of the unique advantages of Salesforce in this instance, was their ability to integrate seamlessly with the clients existing CDP. By leveraging the client's data in combination with

the power of Salesforce, we are now able to create offers and journey orchestration. They have invested in a suite of Salesforce products to support the larger scope of their initiatives. The offers are currently being pushed through their service console, while the journeys are mapped through marketing cloud.



What is the best way for Salesforce to engage with Publicis Sapient?

We want to ensure that all of our engagements with Salesforce are value driven. We see a massive need for businesses within the Travel and Hospitality industry to invest now.

Focusing on large value pools while we look forward to recovery is critical as brands look to allocate previous funds during the pandemic.

We want to align with Salesforce in helping our customers in asking – how do I make the most out of the cash I have today? How do I build resilience into my business? Finally, if the client is behind – how can I turn this into an opportunity to catch up and get ahead.



What about the "Salesforce Ohana" and culture that sticks out in your mind?

One of the things that we see in larger engagements is the use of multiple technologies. Even so, we appreciate that Salesforce approaches every individual piece of an engagement as an opportunity

to partner. We believe that willingness to be collaborative and continue to work with us in the best interest of the client is representative of their culture.