

Covid-19 And The Cruise Industry

An interview with Trey Hickey, GDS Operating Partner, Part 2

How do you see cruise lines reorganized, Post-Covid-19?
Charlie Ryan, Discover Cruises, Brazil

The traditional professional management systems in large organizations historically enabled companies to capture and scale benefits through standardization, routines and process discipline. As ships got bigger and bigger over time, the standardization of processes in all aspects of cruise company eco-systems became more exacerbated.

While important, such business culture often ends up overly focused on business optimization and managing scale while putting less emphasis on business development, particularly on generating “new” channels of external demand. Over time, this has the effect of making previously good companies almost devoid of an entrepreneurial spirit.

Yet to be successful, recovering from post-Covid-19 is going to take a lot more dynamic business acumen, grass roots efforts, out-of-the-box thinking, quality intelligence and effective, new world order leadership than ever before.

Trey Hickey
Partner, GDS
Singapore



How do you see the GDS Partner network?
Winne Chan, Vice President, Crystal Cruises Asia, Hong Kong

Our Partners are entrepreneurs not Generalized Managers.

Our Partners endeavor to see things differently. They focus intently on their entrepreneurial capabilities, local market knowledge and flexibilities that ensure their competitive advantage and provide the foundation for new growth initiatives. They also recognize that to build new businesses you need “out of the box” leaders, those whose strengths spike in areas that forge new paths to success.

Our Partners want employees to take full advantage of their talents and reject the notion of perfectly fungible managers. We encourage leadership and mobilize our teams to achieve the balance required to solve specific challenges and to deliver on our commitments.

What will determine the winning cruise brands?
KY Chung, Price Breaker, Singapore

Perhaps the defining skill of winning brands post-Covid will be a new era of business development and business building. External insight, like that provided by GDS, using un-biased views will help change otherwise inwardly focused organizations.

The idea is a complex recipe of creativity, customer and market intimacy, networks, partnerships, flexible investment structures, scale and risk mitigation.

How does the GDS Partner network supplement cruise line functions?
Roger Shou, former VP of Sales, Royal Caribbean, China

Talent is the essential bonding agent.

We find and retain the right talent. GDS will help companies break free of old models and discover lower cost solutions while still growing market share internationally. Within GDS we substitute “control” with “context,” slimming down the rulebook and empowering our local teams to make more decisions to benefit companies we represent. This idea is, after all, at the heart of the booming gig-economy structure.

We also aim to break the stranglehold of functional silos with cross-functional teaming. We offer team bonus incentives, and are creatively reshaping our internal compensation systems to ensure people are being paid “at source” on performance. Our results driven approach is centered on a win-win philosophy between us, our partners and our passengers and we continuously operate to the benefit of all our constituents.



How does network optimization happen at GDS across such a wide geography?
Caroline MacDonald, Group VP, Global Sales, Rosewood Hotels

Simple, its Teams.

Professional management companies manage scale by adding layers. At GDS we do it with a broad network of highly diversified teams. We mobilize our teams to pursue new initiatives and then demobilize them to focus on the next challenge.

Our Partners have mastered what we call scrum teams: small, cross-functional teams that take a bold strategic initiative and translate it into a prototype tested in any market around the globe. They then turn the winning prototype into a repeatable model that can be recalibrated and scaled across our network. This concept is unique to GDS and is incredibly powerful for the brands we represent.

Our scrum teams have two mandates: 1) they must endeavor to challenge and disrupt and 2) they must excel at scalable execution. Since these goals are often at odds, we resolve the conflict across the network by developing three communities of talent that work together. The disruptor community, the execution community and the scaling community, together bridge the gap between innovation and execution.

This process is overseen by our Commercial Advisory Board which is made up of a cross section of our world with members from Japan, Greater China, Europe and South America.



This article is part of GDS's Partner Network News.

About the GDS Partnership

The GDS Partner Network offers support and guidance to the brands we represent. We equip you with the tools and insights you need to be highly effective in your role, enabling you to focus on the issues that really matter to you and your business.