



Join **Roger Allen, Group CEO, Resources for Leisure Assets (RLA)** for the breakout session focusing on [Designing a Resort to Deliver the Right Experience](#). A recognised global advisor to investors, owners, developers and management companies Roger will lead the audience through creating the experience. This session will centre around key design considerations when considering developing or renovating a resort, how to integrate distinct amenities to achieve the resorts concept and how to best take advantage of a resorts environment.

### **1. What makes a successful resort?**

Unfortunately, there is no one secret sauce, but the short answer is that the whole resort must be more than the sum of its parts. Yes, location attributes such as mountains, beach and sea are helpful, along with minimal seasonality weather fluctuation and good airlift access which are all beneficial features. The commercial success of a resort is really founded upon compelling guest experience provisions that elevate the property and its location as a brand.

### **2. What amenities do you see as usually the most important/performing?**

That's tough question because it very much depends on the resort; the leisure, entertainment and F&B offerings are always a staple requirement. But this landscape is changing, influenced by millennials, the nomad travellers and guests with the desire for new experiences. Travellers today are all looking for that magical and tangible experience, which is the opportunity awaiting to be defined and created by the resort.

The Walt Disney World® Resort WOW experiences are great examples of how to create extra-unique experiences that as they state create 'memories that last a lifetime'.

### **3. What are the main considerations when planning a mixed-use resort?**

The mixed-use resort concept needs the right blend of accommodation, commercial, cultural and entertainment experiences in just the right proportion to be a success! Correlating the mixed-use concept with forecasted guest demographics and footfall volumes with hotel room inventory count, residential unit numbers, leisure, sport and entertainment facilities, retail and office space and many other experiential amenities is to put in simple terms an expensive jigsaw puzzle.

If you get the mix and proportions wrong, it's a certain failure. Get them right, by selecting the appropriate project consulting development team and you will have a destination with its own eco-system that drives year-round performance.

### **4. How do the different components integrate?**

Integrating the different components is probably one of the biggest challenges that is faced by resorts. Obviously, the design of a resort is crucial in how the components interconnect and can be accessed. If the guest is not engaging in all the different resort components, the resort will not be able to elevate the guest's leisure experience and so then you become a standard hotel in a resort setting.

Excellent trained staff that help guide and influence the guest experience is vital to the integration. Technology is certainly helping resorts facilitate the guest integration of components. Specially designed resort apps help to orientate the guest with maps and program/service information delivered directly to the guest, simplifying planning, access and bookings for them.

### **5. How important is asset management in resorts and how does it differ from other asset classes such as hotels?**

Resort asset management is a vital part of driving financial success for both owner and operator. It is important to understand that as an asset class, resorts are arguably a more complex operation with many more moving parts that drive the TrevPAR, and ultimately the financial success of the destination.

Resorts can typically be operated in silos with lots of disconnects between the various departments. Therefore, asset management of resorts is very much hands-on and requires strong understanding of how all the diverse operational units can function in synergy to propel the resort experience and branding. This provides the catalyst for operations, marketing, sales and revenue management all to work much closer as a unit to drive the financial performance of the asset.

### **6. One of your areas of expertise is wellbeing: how do resorts integrate this concept into their properties beyond a spa, and what can it bring to the business?**

In today's world it is essential that resorts cater to the needs of their guests' wellbeing, which may manifest itself through various combinations of leisure, recreation, wellness, healthcare, sporting activities and experiences.

To make wellbeing a success factor in a resort, which is ultimately measured by its financial contribution, its integration into the whole property is vital. It can no longer be a bolt on amenity,

like we see with spas in most hotels. Wellbeing cannot be provided simply as a service offering on a menu card because it is not a specific service or piece of equipment. It must be part of a more holistic approach of the resort to create wellbeing touch points and related experiences throughout the property, such as room design, food and beverage offerings, the indoor and outdoor activities, communication and digital platforms.

## **7. What can wellbeing bring to the business?**

First of all, it helps the resort be set-up to capture the travellers who are interested in wellness which is a broad base appeal and very main stream today. Operationally, when a wellbeing concept is developed, implemented and managed right in a resort, it becomes the vehicle to a closer service delivery by the resort team. It enables service teams to provide better personalised service experiences and then it becomes more authentic and tailored to the guests. This translates into greater guest spending and higher retention levels.

## **8. What do you look for in a resort or a destination when you travel?**

I have a thirst for new content and therefore I am always looking for a resort or destination that is offering me something different culturally and experientially. When I am there I want the resort to make my life easier and to be able to engage in the offerings, which means the resort should anticipate my needs. The key is to make everything accessible and simple but personable.

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