

Sleep

The Hotel Design Event



UFI Entry - Sleep 2016

<http://www.ufi.org/award/the-2017-ufi-marketing-award/>

From show organisers to industry gurus - Success stories from evolving businesses

About Sleep

Sleep, the hotel design, development and architecture event takes place at London's Business Design Centre over two days every November. The event brings together 150 exhibitors and 4,700 visitors from across the hotel design industry for two days of sourcing, networking and informed debate. In 2016, Sleep initiated a series of tactics which saw the event move from reflecting to directing the industry.

The hotel industry is in a constant state of disruption, led by the sharing economy, the rise of boutique and lifestyle offerings, and a greater emphasis on the guest 'experience'. The need for designers to be challenged and inspired has never been more important in ensuring they are effective.

As Brand Director for Sleep Joel Butler's role was to take on the structure of Freeman's 24 points of design thinking. Where we used to be guided by industry experts, he is now immersed in the market, talking to customers and has built a powerful network and sounding board within the hotel community. This shift has moved Sleep from outside the industry, to become a key driving force within it.

Every year we set out to engage and delight our customers; growing our visitor numbers and increasing the exhibitor rebook rate, and to engage with the best and most influential industry voices. Sleep 2016 was no different.

Design Thinking

Events have moved on from a transactional marketplace where features were added as supplementary to the show, as we enter the stage of design thinking where events must maintain and grow their commercial authority, but think like a magazine, and be confident enough to not only

listen to what our community are telling us they want, but to look at the market and be bold enough to draw our own conclusions and propose a way forward

In short, we move from event organisers, to event designers.

How we did it

We looked to the market who told us about the challenge of creating hotel experiences for millennials. We probed the theory of millennials outside of our community and into the world of social and behavioural science. We partnered with social science laboratory Sinus Milieus to develop the show theme - the science of tribes.

The Science of Tribes theme was designed to challenge our community on the very notion of 'millennials', and cut to the heart of their debate. In taking a deep dive into a more considered, scientific approach to categorising different types of hotel guests, the Science of Tribes was born

This theme defined our creative for the campaign which challenged viewers to look, then look again by using abstract symbolism for literal hotel spaces (a pipe as a bar, a boot as the lobby, an umbrella as a guestroom and an apple as a restaurant). The meaning is completely subjective and emphasises differing values and perceptions of the world.

The topic sparked the imaginations of design heavyweights, with five international design practices coming forward to compete in the annual Sleep Set competition in which concept rooms, re-imagined afresh every year, explore new perspectives in hotel guestroom design. Leading international practices Aukett Swanke and Gensler, each represented by their London studio, were joined by cutting edge Tokyo-based Mitsui Designtec, award-winning interior design specialists Studio Proof, and WOW, the innovative Singaporean practice known for its outstanding hotel and resort design across Asia.

Representatives from these design practices gathered to attend a theme-based workshop called Deep Sleep where Sinus presented their scientific theory and the designers in turn created their artistic and design visions. They took the science and created artistic and design led magic.

Award winning restaurant and bar designer Superfuture were the next to enveloped by the theme, and took on the task of designing the Sleep Bar – the social hub of the event.

Over the course of the campaign, the Sleep Set and Bar designers created concept posters, they wrote guest blogs, they wrote abstract statements to whet visitors' appetites, and they sat for video interviews. What's more, the theme discussion engaged influential visitors, with Starwood hotels also writing a blog. All of this crowd-sourced content was broadcast across social media, emails and hosted across the Sleep website.

At the Event

The result was the Sleep Set competition was seen as 'the best yet', with a tense a 20 minute delay in the judges announcement due to a vigorous disagreement as to who should win! Visitors were divided in their winner. The Science of Tribes conference session was the highest attended session across the conference, attracting 16% of all conference attendees and 2016, and 46% more than the 2nd most popular session.

The Bar was a profound experience series of black cubes, each one asking 'which tribe are you?' The bar has since been shortlisted for best pop up bar of the year (up against semi-permanent projects with a 2 year lifespan)

A soundtrack was produced for the event based on the antithesis of tribes – taking the music of people that made their own direction. Visitors were met with the sounds of Ziggy Stardust and The Clash. Studio Appetit created a tribal interpretation of chocolate brands for hotels, giving visitors a taste and brand experience.

The theme discussion extended to the show floor with leading Spanish manufacturer Roca creating 3 guestroom bathrooms based on their perception of the different tribes.

The Results

- Best attended Sleep ever – up 9% visitors yoy
- More articles published about the Science of Tribes than the event
- Exhibitor NPS increased from -8.3 to +8 yoy
- Visitor NPS increased from 0 to 9 yoy
- Rebook rate of 78%
- A 14% increase in international visitors yoy
- 73% engagement with theme in post-show survey

Why it worked

As a team we reinvent the show every year. We never get complacent or think it's good enough. We're always striving to improve and that means that each year we delight and surprise our community.

We have the most demanding audience you could imagine. Our community are responsible for creating joy, long lasting memories and experiences for families and business travellers etc.

It's our responsibility to inspire, to provoke, to challenge and to shock this audience. For this reason, we lack any complacency. We embrace the controversial and the unorthodox.

Because we were bold enough to say 'here's a conversation' it created an ecosystem that produced and sourced content on our behalf, allowing the brand to be heard above the noise. Moving away from the old model of paying 'experts' a fee to deliver content, we started the discussion and the community came with us on the journey.

As we write this application we've just received a blog from the global brand Gensler reflecting on the Sleep experience leading with a quote from Brand Director, Joel Butler

<http://www.gensleron.com/lifestyle/2017/5/3/beyond-market-niches-designing-hotels-that-can-flex.html>

We're proud of Sleep because our community look forward to it. They want to come to Sleep.

Erik Nissen Johansen, Creative Director and Founder of Stylt Trampoli and a judge of last year's Sleep Set described the event as *"...a window for creatives to show the hotel industry uncompromised ideas. They ease our fear of being wrong and lead to greater innovation."*

And how much have we paid for all this? Nothing. We didn't pay a single supplier, designer, journalist, researcher, chocolatier, soundtrack creator, hotel operator to engage with The Science of Tribes at Sleep. The content, both built and intellectual, was all crowd-sourced.