Gaining Insights Into the Hospitality Vertical

BACKGROUND

Cisco (www.cisco.com) is the worldwide leader in IT that helps companies seize the opportunities of tomorrow by proving that amazing things can happen when you connect the previously unconnected. With a focused corporate push into the hospitality vertical, Cisco wanted to validate assumptions and determine key behaviors of IT management and purchase decision makers at hotels serving both business and leisure travelers.

THE CHALLENGE: Understand How Hotels Acquire Technology

Clearly understanding the hospitality technology acquisition process was a key input needed for a planned worldwide marketing initiative focused on the vertical. To gain these insights, Cisco called for an engagement focused on the following hotel behaviors:

- Who influences/controls their choice of manufacturer products
- How they implement the products into the desired solutions
- From whom they actually purchase the products
- Obtain the names of specific influencers, solution providers and consultants from customer decision makers and profile them
- Understand the most critical issues faced in the process of selecting manufacturers and implementing converged network infrastructure for new property or retrofitting projects

THE SOLUTION: A Custom Customer Research Project

With such specific requirements in a specialized vertical, a custom research project was launched. As part of the project, senior executives were interviewed in the various European and Asian countries, Mexico and the U.S. The hotel properties were selected according to a mix of establishments: luxury, business and vacation; comprised of international/national chains, franchised and independent locations. A total of 62 surveys were completed with the following key findings:

- Getting involved with a manufacturer or partner at initial planning stages is essential
- Half of all respondents relied on channel partners for specification, implementation, and product transaction
- About a third relied on the manufacturer for specification and implementation
- Nearly half wanted a direct purchasing relationship with the manufacturer, even if they are relying on a channel partner for specification and implementation support
- A list of 33 hospitality-focused channel partners were identified, many of which were not Cisco partners.