

EITK partners with brands that are providing outstanding customer service experiences. The Brand Spotlight Series showcases innovations and solutions to CX challenges, from many of today's leading brands.

BRAND SPOTLIGHT HILTON HONORS

Creating Lifetime Loyalty Through
Exceptional Guest Experiences

Q: Tell us a bit about your background and how you came to be at Hilton?

My Hilton story goes all the way back to high school. As fate would have it, my first job was at a Hilton resort in Florida – taking guests to the beach every day. In that environment it was not hard to fall in love with the company! I have amazing memories of that summer, the team members I met, the brand, and the overall experience. So as you might expect, I have a strong emotional connection to the first company that hired me. Many years later, when I heard about the Hilton Honors opportunity, I was absolutely thrilled to join the team. For 30 years, the Hilton Honors program has led the industry with a number of innovations, and I have a passion for ensuring we continue to innovate and look for ways to improve the customer experience.

Q: Can you provide any details on your role, the Honors program and why it's so important to Hilton?

As the steward of Hilton HHonors, my most important role is to be the voice of our members. Our team is constantly doing research and listening to what our members want most, and my personal mission is to advocate on their behalf. So on a typical day, I'm meeting with Finance to discuss potential new benefits, Marketing to talk about our newest promotions, Digital to review enhancements to our best-in-class app, and whatever else may be brewing.

At Hilton, we also like to say that loyalty is more than just a program. It's a mindset that stems from the individual relationships we build with our members. In fact, our biggest opportunity to differentiate the program is our incredible team members at more than 4,800 hotels and our contact centers around the world. They are building relationships every day, and delivering the most personalized, exceptional experiences possible. For us, every day is a new opportunity to develop a meaningful and lasting relationship with every guest.

Q: Tell us about some of the cutting edge innovation in the hospitality industry.

When we approach hospitality and loyalty, these days we start by looking through a digital lens. What are the best, most innovative technologies that will make positive, personal impacts on our guests' experiences? Asking that question led us to create the Hilton Honors App, one of the highest rated travel apps, coupled with the most digitally advanced program. Through the app and our digital features, we empower guests to personalize their stay their way. For instance, Hilton Honors is the only program to allow guests to choose their rooms in more than 4,500 locations worldwide. Want a room with a view? Use the app to view the hotel floor plan and pick your room location before you arrive, just like you would choose your seat on an airplane. On top of that, Hilton Honors members can bypass traditional check-in at the front desk and go directly to their room using their smartphone as a Digital Key. These features have become so popular that the app is downloaded once every eight seconds – that's more than 600 times an hour – so we will no doubt continue to invest in this benefit and find more ways to take the friction out of travel for our guests.



AARON GLICK
VP Hilton Honors

“ At Hilton, we also like to say that loyalty is more than just a program. It's a mindset that stems from the individual relationships we build with our members. ”

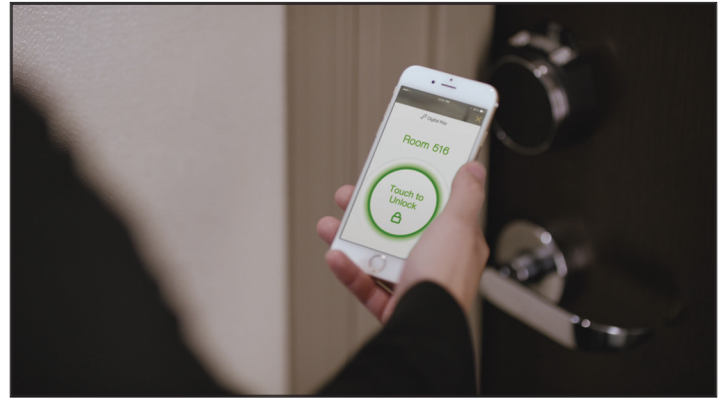
Q: Why is customer loyalty so important?

Customer loyalty lies at the heart of everything we do as a global hospitality company. In order for a customer loyalty program to be successful, it has to evolve as customer tastes change and new technologies develop. But one thing that never changes is the desire for exceptional experiences that are relevant and personal to every guest. In that respect, our loyalty program's objective has been the same for 30 years. Yet, we are still innovating and evolving our offerings to raise the bar on exceptional. One example is our "Stop Clicking Around" campaign and exclusive Hilton Honors discount that launched last year. We wanted to show our loyalty to customers in a purposeful, meaningful way – so we offered all members an exclusive discount that can't be found anywhere else, as long as they book directly with us. We've seen a tremendous response since the launch of the biggest marketing campaign in the company's nearly 100-year history. The message resonated, as Hilton HHonors grew by over 9 million members in one year alone, our award-winning app was downloaded more than 3.5 million times in 2016, and our Digital Key feature unlocked over 5 million doors since launching in 2015. We're excited to grow the program even more in 2017.

Q: What keeps the Hilton Honors program special and above the competition?

Hilton HHonors has made a large commitment to digital, and it's setting us apart. We're still the only major hospitality company that allows you to choose your own room. And we're not stopping there. When it comes to the digital pipeline, we are going to go faster, not slower. I mentioned the popularity of the Hilton Honors app and how it serves as the "remote control" for our guests. Investing in this technology allows us to stay ahead of the competition and ensures that we give our guests the most personalized stay experience possible. Additionally, members can redeem their Points for one of a kind, unforgettable experiences. For example, through our partnership with Live Nation, Hilton Honors offers once-in-a-lifetime opportunities like dinner and a sound-check with the Barenaked Ladies, access to an intimate Jason Derulo concert in one of our premier properties, or drum lessons with your favorite musical artist. Our members even have the opportunity to walk the red carpet at the GRAMMY Awards or attend some of the world's most exciting sporting events, like McLaren Formula One Racing.

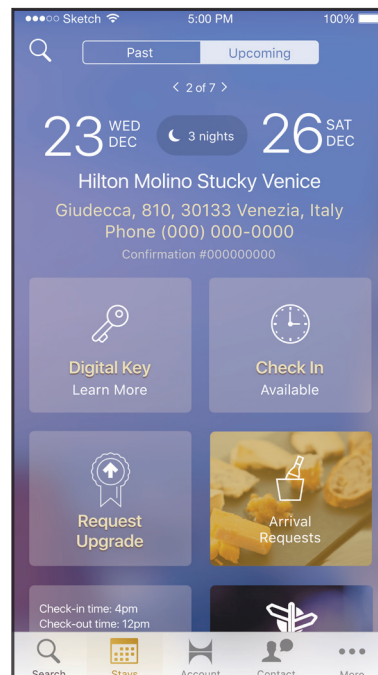
“ In order for a customer loyalty program to be successful, it has to evolve as customer tastes change and new technologies develop. But one thing that never changes is the desire for exceptional experiences that are relevant and personal to every guest. ”



The Hilton Digital Key feature has unlocked over 5 million doors since launching in 2015.

Q: How would you describe Hilton's culture? How does your brand build/maintain a consistent culture and employee engagement?

Our team members are the best in the business and work on the front lines with our guests to deliver exceptional experiences every day. With this in mind, we work hard to continuously train them to provide the best service and to be the most hospitable in the industry. And don't just take our word for it. Great Place to Work® and Fortune named Hilton as one of the 100 Best Workplaces, Best Workplaces for Women and Best Workplaces for Millennials. I'm also very proud that last year we welcomed all of our team members to become active participants in Hilton Honors. They can earn and redeem Points just like our guests, which helps them understand the ins and outs of the program and allows them to engage our customers with the latest new features and promotions. "Team Member HHonors" has quickly become a bedrock of the Hilton culture.



A screenshot of the Hilton Honors App. The award winning app is one of the highest rated travel apps and was downloaded more than 3.5 million times in 2016.

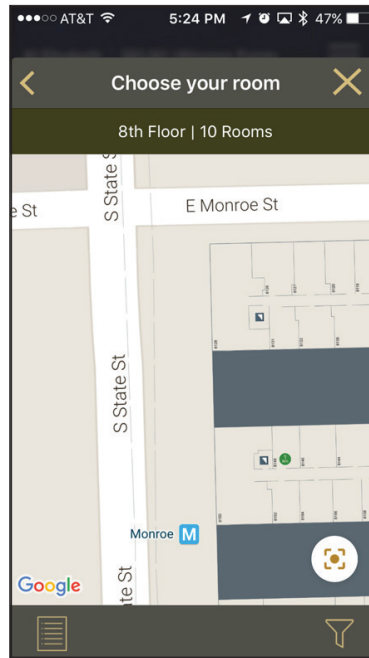
Q: AI is a big theme we're seeing moving in 2017. What's your take on AI and the role it's playing in transforming the customer experience?

The world of technology is changing faster than ever, which is why we are stepping up the pace of innovation. With AI on the rise and gaining momentum, we're looking at new tools to better connect with our guests. For example, we recently announced the pilot of real-time chat within the Hilton Honors App – which will enable guests to connect directly with our Team Members. This will let our guests request services like housekeeping visits or late check-out. We also launched Fun Finder, another new feature through the app that allows us to share personalized recommendations and special offers with members real-time while they're on-property.

Q: Is there one thing you're proud of (in relation to customer experience/Hilton Honors, etc.) that your team or the company achieved in 2016?

I'm proud that we're incorporating customer feedback into everything we do. We are continuously talking to members – getting to know them, asking for suggestions and anticipating what matters most on their travels. So for example, one of our biggest initiatives last year was simplifying our approach to Hilton Honors system-wide promotions. We've strived to make the promotions simpler, straightforward, asterisk-free, and inclusive of all properties. Since we made those changes, the promotions have become some of the richest in the hotel loyalty space, the reviews have been overwhelmingly positive, and customers are giving us a higher share of their travel wallets. It's fantastic to know that our members are enjoying the experience and maximizing their rewards. Last year we also revisited our Lifetime Diamond criteria and added new ways to achieve our most elite status. These requests came directly from our members, and this year we're looking at even more ways to give our members what they've asked for and show our loyalty back to them.

I'm proud that we're incorporating customer feedback into everything we do. We are continuously talking to members – getting to know them, asking for suggestions and anticipating what matters most on their travels.



Want a room with a view? Use the Hilton Honors App to view the hotel floor plan and pick your room location.

Q: What do you think the main focus will be in 2017, in relation to customer experience?

The big thing in 2017 is "more". Customers want more from every touch point in the journey. So at Hilton Honors, we'll continue to listen to our guests and find ways to make the program even more valuable and more flexible. The Hilton Honors app will certainly be another area of focus, as we'll look for ways to deliver even more personalized experiences. And we'll make sure our guests feel even more honored every time they interact with the program. 2017 will be an important year to deliver more, and show commitment to our loyal members.

Thank you to Aaron and the Hilton team for taking part in this EITK Brand Spotlight. Stay tuned for more Spotlights coming your way in 2017!



Execs In The Know