

# The Fast Track: Why we pursue speed over scale

**A**bout a year ago, I climbed into the back of a Suburban at the nation's capital with a handful of Legislative Action Summit attendees, all hoteliers, who managed to catch one-half of my job description at My Place Hotels. That is, the General Counsel half of it.

The quick ride made for quality time, rife with friendly digs at the corporate lawyer. Our occupations can precede us sometimes, so I've grown partial to the ice breakers that come with mine. Nevertheless, it wasn't long before my car pool acquaintances took genuine interest in my work, and even more so in the company I work for. Something was different than it first appeared to them and I could sense that my perspective had caught them by surprise.

While my new friends made the occasion a memorable one, it wasn't all too unusual. Based on my experience with franchisees, many have enjoyed their fair share of correspondence from the siloed offices of my competitive counterparts, and consequently, most aren't very interested in the lawyer's perspective. Give me a little time, however, and it will become clear that we don't suffer from the silo effect at My Place.

As the executive vice president of one of America's fastest growing hotel brands (the other half of my title), I frequently assess our production value and each component that contributes or detracts from it. We often promote the combination of our core values of efficiency, relationship, and integrity as a defining trait that accelerates our growth, but the standalone technique I find to be increasingly unique about My Place's approach is the same technique that surprises others about my own.

That is integration. It's the key to providing the same level of attention to our 100<sup>th</sup> franchisee as we did to our first, and I'm chiefly responsible for maintaining that value.

My Place was envisioned to be the ultimate resource



My Place Hotels is headquartered in Aberdeen, S.D.

to its owners and operators before the first franchise agreement was executed. In a letter addressed to prospects during franchise system launch in 2014, My Place co-founder and chairman Ron Rivett expressed his dissatisfaction with the deteriorating quality of franchise relationships and laid out a few things we are certain of. At the top of the list, he's committed to hearing their concerns directly.

That means we all are, and that's where the dividing line between our franchise system and others begins. From there, notable differences continue to separate us from our competitors, and trickles down to the surprising reactions I get when I'm able to share my purview.

As a fully-integrated service provider, every position

in our company is guided by the owner's perspective. So, while our franchisees have every resource provided by companies much larger than ours, our resources are continually developed and delivered within a structure that allows communications to flow freely in each direction. For franchisees who've chosen to diversify their portfolio with us, the difference in integration means less, but more productive conversations, receiving priority responses in a matter of minutes rather than days, and perhaps most importantly, full access to everyone on the team—including Ron.

Knowing how these key benefits contribute to our franchisee's experience, it becomes clear how they contribute to our overall growth. Since the franchise system launched in 2014, we've assisted each owner in completing every step from development to operations, from site selection to onsite training, and the best part—we're prepared to do it hundreds and hundreds of times over.

With a substantial pipeline between hotels under construction or contract and only about half of the 50 states left to enter, I'm incredibly proud of the areas we've seen exceptional growth. But, I might just be as proud of where we haven't.

Whether it's a team meeting or an entire company, the number of people and the quality of their interactions will define the quality of their production, and even more directly, their relationships and morale. Through integration we can focus on improving the quality of those interactions in a variety of ways and limiting what scale can detract from them.

For all these reasons, I see scale not as an indicator of success, but increasingly more so as an inhibitor to the relationships, dynamics, and speed that is necessary to achieve it. By pursuing integration over proliferation, the principle becomes a core benefactor to company culture and productivity, as well as momentum.



My Place EVP/General Counsel Matt Campbell joined the team in 2015.