

Finding Our Place in the Travel & Hospitality Tech Ecosystem



Posted by [Mae Cichelli](#), June 11, 2019

Ah, the life of travel and adventure.

From shot-gunning beers at breakfast in Colombia to glamping at a wellness retreat in New Zealand, there are few things closer to our hearts than travel here at Bluedot. With our team's shared experiences in exploring the world several times over and speaking nearly 25 languages, you might think we were practically experts in the travel industry. We thought so, too.

That is, until recently, when we joined Plug and Play's **Travel & Hospitality** innovation ecosystem. It's comprised of the top brands in the industry, seasoned mentors, unique networking events, and private business development sessions. Participating in this ecosystem, we were able to quickly identify the complexities within the travel industry, sharpened our ability to test out real-world concepts and address travel companies' true needs.

Aside from the obvious Fiji sunsets that we love so much, why travel and hospitality?

The travel and hospitality vertical accounts for about 10% of employment worldwide, contributing **\$8 Trillion** to the global economy in 2017. Excluding ride-hailing and bike-sharing companies, the travel tech sector has raised over \$19 Billion in venture capital funding since 2008. With this amount of growth in an already massive sector, there's still a disconnect between enterprise-level players and disruptive startups. The big players struggle to identify or implement new technologies and trends, while smaller companies struggle to scale in a well-established market.

In response to these challenges, Plug and Play decided to bring both groups - legacy brands and agile startups - to bring more innovation to the industry as a whole and deliver better experiences to consumers.

Travel and hospitality has seen an incredible shift over the past decade and a half. The industry is more fractured than ever before. Think of how your parents or grandparents used to book travel and sightseeing in another country. Visiting a travel agent's office has been replaced with Expedia, Airbnb, Yelp, sightseeing apps and more. Because of these fractures, industry providers are now only seeing snapshots of travelers - incomplete or siloed data about their customers' experiences.

Hotels in particular can see only a small part of their customers' lifecycle journey. Our mentors shared how the hotel chains we all know and love are actually owned and managed by franchisees and their management services. But - *plot twist!* - franchisees often run multiple hotels, many from competing chains. Without getting too much into the weeds, you can see how just this tiny sliver of the travel industry is a jungle gym when it comes to viewing their customers' full experiences.

One of the core solutions we identified as a result of joining Plug and Play's ecosystem is how location can play a critical role in giving brands more touch points along their customers' journey. The more touch points, via location, the better understanding brands and enterprises have of their customers' real-world behaviors along throughout their entire travel experience.

The real-world behaviors that location provides aren't just still frames of a customer at the time of purchase, but the traveler's story - their adventures and experiences along the way. We're excited to help brands deliver more robust and personalized experiences to travelers by understand their needs and preferences along the entire customer journey.