




# Design a New World

## YOUR NEXT DESIGN BRIEF: BECOME AN AGENT OF CHANGE

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[Mary Scoviak \(/users/mary-scoviak\)](#)

Dust off that superhero suit. The biggest “to do” that lies ahead for hospitality designers may not have as much to do with mastering modular construction or learning Autodesk Revit software as it does with making the world a better place. At least that’s what the visionary executives who spoke on the 2018 Boutique Design Power Players: Women Leaders in Hospitality panel and breakfast (cosponsored by NEWH) at Boutique Design New York (BDNY) see ahead for this industry.

The eminent speakers at this signature event included: Glyn Aeppel, president and chief executive officer, Glencove Capital; Cindy Andrews, president, Sunbrite Outdoor Furniture; Beth Campbell, chief executive officer, Wilson Associates; Julia Monk, senior principal, director of hospitality design, HOK; Rachel Rangelov, senior vice president of design and construction, Longview Senior Housing Advisors and Teri Urovsky, vice president, design and project management, Marriott Intl. When asked what they foresee as the next big change for hospitality design, Campbell said designers are going to have to be ready to shift their thinking from just reflecting a locale or neighborhood culture to actually finding ways to make that project enhance the community around it. It’s not on the owner or operator anymore. “It’s up to the designer to look for and create lasting change that will provide a transformative experience for the guest, expand opportunities for the owner, anyone working at that property and the businesses that surround it and improve the quality of life for people who live and work in that neighborhood.”

Campbell’s fellow honorees already got that message and have put it to work. Aeppel’s decision to bring MOB Hotels, masterminded by Cyril Aouizerate (the maverick who launched and grew Mama Shelter before selling his stake in this irreverent boutique hotel group to AccorHotels in 2014) to the United States is a case in point. Why she saw a reason to support one more brand? She thought his vision for an affordable hotel that brings people together around common interests from cooking to meditation, gives area craftspeople a sales platform via rotating showcase displays in the hotel and supports both guests’ and locals’ wellbeing with food offers from local organic growers, community gardens and neighborhood food trucks is the kind of do well by doing good offer that will differentiate his new flag.

Rangelov is at the forefront of the movement to revolutionize the look and functionality of senior living communities—shifting them away from an institutional care model to dynamic neighborhoods that promote socialization, healthy lifestyles and encourage residents to continually explore new experience and self-reinvention. Monk noted that the point of design has already evolved from conspicuous consumption to experiences. The next step? Hotel stays that enable guests to be transformed and leave feeling better both emotionally and physically than when they checked in. And, she says, that’s will have to apply across generations. “I always consider accessibility in my designs. It’s not a niche that’s relegated to a couple of special rooms. It’s a given,” she says.

Urovsky pointed out that Marriott continues to seek out ways to use the size of its platform to engineer positive change. Basically, she said, it’s about finding ways to anticipate what it would take to make each stay “better” for that guest—whether with brand-specific initiatives such as Westin’s programs to make it

easy for guests to take their healthy lifestyles on the road or as a matter of corporate policy to create brands with a more holistic mission statement. She’ also booked more time on her personal calendar for mentoring and teaching. Andrews reminded studio principals that both employees and clients should be included in do-good planning. Creating cost-saving refurbishment options for customers hard hit by the business disruptions of hurricanes or finding C-suite solutions that will enable employees to have a better work/life balance will be an increasingly important tool in the managerial skill set.

Not every initiative can be carried out on this scale; but each has a huge impact. Michelle Finn, senior vice president, Boutique Design Group, participated in the Mitch Zerg & Associates (MZA) efforts at design CRAWL 2018 Los Angeles, which raised \$1,000 for A Child’s Dream and The Trevor Project charities.

If you want to do something from your own workstation, follow the lead of Larry Traxler, senior vice president—global design, Hilton. What started as a side trip with (the late) Jesse Kalisher, founder and then president of the art company that bears his name, to visit a local school in Africa has grown into a life-changing center for a community. For background, see the “[Heroes & Mavericks](http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/STMG/boutiquedesign_201806/index.php#/30) ([http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/STMG/boutiquedesign\\_201806/index.php#/30](http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/STMG/boutiquedesign_201806/index.php#/30))” feature in our June 2018 edition. Or, check out what you can do [to help](https://www.journeymaninternational.org/build/?s=XXXXXXXXX) (<https://www.journeymaninternational.org/build/?s=XXXXXXXXX>), right now.

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