Experience Design Lab Helps Allergan **Redefine** National Sales Meeting

THE SITUATION

For a pharmaceutical company, change is a part of daily life. Whether changes in leadership, regulations or products, there is an intense need to engage stakeholders on multiple levels. Allergan's NeuroUro annual meeting is no exception. Recently, a switch in the event's ownership opened an opportunity to think about the event and its stakeholders differently.

According to the event's new owner Joe Gozdieski, Executive Director, Training and Development, Neurosciences and Urology for Allergan, "This event feels like five wedding receptions over five days with a dozen brides. I needed a better idea of how to integrate the key stakeholders, ensuring they felt listened to and informed about what was happening. More importantly, they needed to have confidence in me and my team about where we are going, how we would get there and that we are making the best decisions for our business."

With new event leadership and a need to seamlessly integrate key stakeholders into the event, Allergan called on Maritz Global Events to help align the event and the entire organization around a single guidepost.

> "I only bring my team together twice a year. I was entrusting that this investment would give something to me and it has 100-fold."
>
> **JOE GOZDIESKI**
>
> EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT, NEUROSCIENCES AND UROLOGY

THE SOLUTION

In order to identify this alignment, Joe's team of training directors and senior managers from Allergan's Neurosciences and Urology Business Unit gathered to discuss the event and unearth the different personas of the event's guests. Over two half days, the team was led through a facilitated Experience Design Lab, digging into the event's challenges and opportunities.

During the Lab, organic conversation uncovered an organization-wide challenge: transparency. The group identified the opportunity to communicate with sales people more clearly and transparently, showing both the personal and professional side of the organization.

The sales people were passionate about the company and what they were selling, but they wanted to feel more connected and engaged. This lead to the event's organizing principle of "Elevating Passion."

"I don't think any of us would have come anywhere close to 'Elevating Passion' as the direction on our own," Joe said. "The Design Lab created a safe place for our people to share what they feel and have observed, leading us to this common vision for our event and the organization."

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> The data set that came back to me was extremely thorough. It empowered me at another level to have greater presence within the organization."

THE RESULTS

Following the Design Lab, Joe rallied his team and the organization's leadership behind the "Elevating Passion" organizing principle. Through the strategic framework provided by Maritz Global Events, the company has a roadmap for critical success factors and prioritization.

"If something comes to us and doesn't fit with our priorities, it doesn't happen," Joe said. "It allows us to think through every element of the event, and clearly communicate what success looks like for this event throughout the entire organization."

In addition, Joe decided they needed an event production partner that could align their capabilities and contributions with the event's organizing principle.

Halfway through the proposal stage, the team provided information from the lab to production companies that bid on the event, and made their decision based on how the production company best integrated the learnings from the lab.

Joe's team decided to focus on storytelling to bring the organizing principle of "Elevating Passion" to life.

"There's an importance of connecting on different levels through the art of storytelling. We want more engagement from our representatives, our patients, our physicians, our leadership — demonstrating their passion of why we are doing what we are doing and why it's the right thing. We hear those stories all the time and now they can share them through this event."