

# What's Your Shelf Life?

In today's market, the best brands need to evolve and meet current demands. Changing a brand can be scary, especially when success is on the horizon. We often ask ourselves, "Will this change keep the growth coming or will it slow it down?" Any type of change can be uncomfortable, but it will, more than likely, be rewarded by an extended shelf life and increased sales. I am a big fan of brand extensions. As advisors, you need to start thinking about brand extensions, and you need to create flavors that attract certain appetites appealing

to your products. Doing it the same old way doesn't create excitement or fulfill the need of the consumer to feel special.

Consider the typical product showcases that many agencies put on to attract customers. Some of these are focused on honeymoons or cruises, etc. I challenge you to conduct showcases that are even more targeted. I recently attended a Suite Access Fair put on by Valerie Wilson Travel in New York for advisors. I'm pictured here with Kimberly Wilson Wetty, co-president of VWT, and below is Sissy Shuffield of VWT with René Zimmer, GM of Finca Cortesin and Javier Rivadulla, director of sales and marketing for the hotel. The event specifically promoted VWT's partner hotels and their amazing suite offerings, as well as the amenities the program delivers. The brainchild of co-president Jennifer Wilson-Buttigieg, this event came with awards for top-producing advisors and suppliers. It definitely produced a shelf life

and brand extension for all involved. What's going to be your brand extension?

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## SIGHTINGS

Valerie Wilson Travel hosted its Suite Access Fair in New York recently, bringing together top suppliers and luxury travel advisors.



**1. W'S!**: Anton Birnbaum, GM, W Maldives; Federica Oriente, director, leisure luxury sales, W South Beach and Thanos Economou, complex director of sales, W Maldives **2. KEY TO LUXURY**: Andrew Jeffries, director of travel industry sales, Maybourne Hotel Group; Kimberly Wilson Wetty, co-president, Valerie Wilson Travel, and Amie Buchanan, director of sales and marketing, The Lowell **3. FRENCH TWIST**: Gerald Krischek, GM, Hotel Prince de Galles; Francesca Marchetti, area sales director, Northern France for Starwood and Aurélien Hacault, account director for Starwood **4. ON THE SCENE**: Manuel Lopez, admin support and special projects and Sheena Young, strategic special projects, VWT **5. GOING STRONG**: Samara Doucette, director of global sales and Dave MacGregor, regional director of global sales, Americas, Rocco Forte Hotels **6. LUXE LANGHAM**: Andrea Ambroze, travel industry sales director; Robin Flanz, sales director, North America, Langham Hospitality; Denise Costa, corporate & travel industry sales manager, Langham Place New York.