

*Podcast Collaboration Discussion with InterFace Seniors Housing Business Leaders Rich Kelley & Eric Goldberg*

Lucas: Welcome to Bridge the Gap Podcast with Josh and Lucas, the senior living podcast here at Interface Seniors Housing Northeast with none other than Rich Kelley of France Media. Welcome, Rich.

Rich: Thank you very much guys. Great to have you here and great to be with you.

Lucas: So, our listeners know very well because they're seeing our posts. Josh, you know, we have been able to create a collaboration and a partnership with the Interface conferences to showcase our podcast and also have access to the great panels and the great guests. It's been a lot of fun to do that.

Josh: Yeah, it's been awesome. So, my first Interface was in Atlanta just a couple months back. What an awesome show. What a great group of people, decision makers, thought leaders in the industry. So, it's really awesome to experience it for the first time and find out more about it and honestly to now really be a part of promoting what you guys are doing which is just fantastic. These regional shows, the positive feedback that we get from that is awesome.

Rich: Thank you. I think the regional events have a certain appeal to them in the sense that you can come in for a day, the night before cocktail party, go to a dinner, go the next day, here's some great content to get you caught up on what's going on in the industry, but also see a lot of people and get some quality networking done and still be home in time for dinner or be home that night and you're back in the office the next day.

And all at, I think, a fair price point, good ROI, good value for your investment and it's been a good formula for us as a company. It's invaluable for the magazine seniors housing business meeting new people. All of our speakers, this is a great chance to speak with them. There's also editorial sources. They're also perhaps advertisers. It's just a nice way to give us another platform to get to know people and of course to follow and document what's going on in the industry.

Lucas: Yeah, I mean there's a lot of synergies that make sense and now, we've gone to Chicago, Atlanta and now today we're in Philadelphia. I believe you guys also have L.A. What's on tap for next year for locations and things like that?

Rich: Well, we don't want to reveal all of our secrets-

Lucas: -we're going to pressure you, give us all of our secrets.

Rich: We've got- we will definitely be in Los Angeles on March 7. That will be the 5th year that we've held the Interface Seniors West. Definitely back in Chicago in June. We'll definitely be back in Atlanta in June for the Southeast event in August and then not sure if we're going to be

back here in the Northeast next year or if we might actually go to Texas or maybe introduce some other new events. Still figuring all that out.

Lucas: Well you're talking to two Texans here.

Josh: Absolutely.

Lucas: So, when you said Texas, our ears perked up. We would definitely put our votes in the cowboy hat for that.

Josh: That's right. So, is that four? Did I hear four conferences?

Rich: We've done four events that last few years. We've toyed with even doing a shorter thing, maybe going out to the specific Northwest, which is obviously a hot bid in this industry. Certainly Texas, there's more development and action going on there than anywhere else in the country.

It's really a matter of time and resources and we don't want to oversaturate the market either but we think we have a plan that people like and I think they've responded to and our attendances have grown every year, knock on wood, so hopefully we'll keep doing the right things and getting the right people to the events and everything else takes care of itself.

Lucas: Absolutely. I mean, you're really onto something. I tell people about the show and it's a huge bang for your buck. There's a lot of value here. Here's a couple of topics for our listeners to understand the format here.

On the main day, you have things like design build projects redefining seniors housing, senior living. You've got architects and designers. You had a keynote address from a big CEO, which is standard. You bring in a thought leader in the space. State of the art in the industry, you have an outlook panel, operations challenge. We've got capital market updates about capital and deal flow and then getting good data with some other big names in the industry.

Josh: Yeah, you know, Lucas, that was just, that was really today. That was the beefy part of the agenda. I thought something that was really cool my first time to be part of the round tables on night one right before the awesome cocktail party networking opportunity. But I was honored to be in the lead Bridging the Generational Divide. It was fascinating the influences that were around the table and the discussion we were able to have. It was so insightful for me as a facilitator. We had literally everyone from market feasibility expert at the table, we had a developer at the table, we had service industry represented, we had staffing expert and we had operators literally all weighing in on everything from bridging the operational divide of communication and staffing to like the resident side from the greatest generation to the next generation.

So, there was conversations like that going on at all these tables and to see people interacting. That's a beautiful part that I think often times you don't get. You kinda get lost in the shuffle at the really big shows. So, I really appreciate that. So, is that what you envisioned happening?

Rich: Well, first of all, thanks for facilitating the round table. You did have a big crowd.

When you put a conference on like this, we cover 8 panels today. We could easily cover 20 but there's just not enough time. So the roundtables are a way for us to cover some topics that for better or for worse we can't fit into the regular agenda or they're an element of a topic that's on the main agenda.

You have a facilitator at the table to kind a leave the discussion to get it started and it's just, I think, great value and education for our attendees and a networking. You never know who you might meet at the table and where it could go.

The roundtable's been a wonderful complement to the rest of the agenda it's a great way to get an event started. It leads right into the cocktail party that people have been have obviously been around the roundtable socializing and talking. So, it's just a very nice bridge to that cocktail party, pardon the pun, and it's been successful and something that we're going to keep a part of all of our events, if not expand because it's something people have responded to.

Lucas: We value this relationship. It's been a lot of fun to partner with you guys and collaborate together, do some cross marketing and you guys have been very gracious to invite us and to him bring us into the fold. Josh, any closing remarks?

Josh: Well, you know, I wanna know just a little bit. So you guys are with France Media- how does that connect to this event? You guys are part of a bigger organization and then don't let us leave with that. I wanna know more about the senior living magazine, what you guys are doing there- what's the circulation? What's the goals? Is that something you're growing? Tell us a little bit about those things.

Rich: Sure, well France Media is a commercial real estate news and information company. So we produce about 13 magazines and a similar number of newsletters on everything from the shopping center industry to student housing, seniors housing and then some regional magazines that target all commercial real estate in different parts of the country.

We also have the Interface conference group division, obviously, and that's another way for us to try to bring people together and further expand our group with introductions to new readers and new advertisers and new editorial sources.

Seniors Housing Business is going great, certainly not a lack of things to talk about and write about in the seniors housing space right now. Not all of them good but that's that's alright because those are important issues to cover. So we will have eight issues next year. We also work with our friends at ASHA on the ASHA 50 and it's been a lot of fun.

We have a tremendous editorial team with Matt Valley and Jeff Shaw, Eric Goldberg and myself on kind of the advertising and marketing side. We really enjoy what we do. The magazine's growing both in terms of circulation, more coverage. We actually added an issue this past year so all things good. The website (is) well received, the e-newsletter we do and of course the conferences.

Ideally it's designed to all work together and we've been able to experience that so it's been a great run so far in the space. We've met a lot of great people. We know people enjoy reading the magazine because they tell us that and they advertise with us and they subscribe. We just want to keep doing our job and the industry will keep doing theirs.

Lucas: Wonderful. Well, lots to look forward to and another big season next year with Interface seniors housing all over the country. You still have the rest of the day. There's still great content and so we'll let Rich get back to that.

Thank you Rich, so much, for having us.

Rich: Lucas, thanks so much. Josh, thank you. Thank you. It's been great working with you guys and thanks for being here.

Lucas: Thank you for your time.

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Lucas: We are here to welcome Eric Goldberg. He is the media advisor for Senior Housing Business. Eric, thanks for being on the show.

Eric: Thanks, glad to be here guys.

Lucas: It's a very exciting day. You have been running all over the place and the real burning question that I know that our audience wants to ask is what is with those awesome shoes?

Josh: Yes, we all want to know about awesome shoes

Eric: The specks. They're my conference shoes. I attend about 10/12 conferences a year, including our own Interface events and they've become sort of my signature. It was not a fundraiser but a auction, live auction. I was talking to a shoe guy, a cobbler in Union- shoutout to him- great guy. They make them handcrafted in Spain. I've talked to this guy for 45 minutes. He's so interesting, I've got to buy something.

I'm like, those are cool and they became my conference shoes.

Lucas: They stand out. I love them.

Josh: I do too man. They make a statement. Nobody else here has got anything like it. Between you and Lucas, Lucas and his Tecova boots, he's like in the Tecova cult and he's going to convert me someday to wearing those nice boots. So, you guys are snazzy for sure.

Eric: Yeah, thank you.

Lucas: So, obviously, InterFace is known for not only just the senior housing business magazine but it's known for the great conferences that our collaboration and cross marketing has really been a very fun thing for Bridge the Gap this year.

So, what do you see going into 2019? What are the next steps are for the Interface conferences?

Eric: Yeah, so we put on four regional events during the year and we plan the same in 2019. We'll be in L.A. March 6th and 7th for Interface Seniors Housing West. We'll be back in Chicago in June, Atlanta in August and back in Philadelphia in November.

We plan on growing the conference. We love (that) we've experienced about a 20 percent attendance growth at each conference. We plan on attracting more dynamic speakers because we're only as good as our panelists, our speakers.

We've been really lucky. We've done 17 of these over five years now. So, people know they event, people know our magazine, Seniors Housing Business. So we plan to get a bunch more really dynamic speakers and putting on some great content.

Lucas: Yeah, we've gotten to know you over the past year and you're obviously you're great at connecting and networking and driving great content into the Interface conferences. But one thing I don't know is what got you interested personally in seniors housing?

Eric: Yeah, that's a good question. So, my background is in media. I have a journalism background. I was a sports writer for my first five years out of college. I covered high school and college football and I don't know. In the mid 90s, I got into sort of business development and ad sales and seniors housing. France Media our parent company just sort of came upon me by accident and it's been a great career.

You hear all the time about operators and people in development. I didn't see seniors housing as a career, I'd never really thought about it and I'm just really grateful that it happened. It's just been a great ride. I'm glad that well I'm in it.

Josh: Super cool.

Lucas: Since the 90s?

Eric: No, no. I've been with the company for five years.

Josh: So, for our listeners that may not have attended an Interface, maybe haven't even heard of Interface yet, and they're new listeners- who is the ideal audience? You know, who are you gearing the content and the program at these regional conferences towards?

Eric: Right, great question. So, if you're a seniors housing owner, operator, investor, developer, if you're a vendor or a service provider to the industry, I think there's great content that we offer and as a product that you guys have seen, there's some really good networking.

We're trying to put on a full day event with a cocktail party the night before that's casual where you don't have to set appointments before you get there where we can network extemporaneously and take back some really good contact information.

Josh: So, we're obviously not in the conference planning business and things like that but you guys obviously put on a great show, a great event, the structure, the organization, but I can only imagine, Lucas and I are obviously in the content business and sometimes that can be a challenge, you know, finding out who the relevant speakers, what's the content, what's the focus for the future, what's relevant. So, how do you guys, you seem to be touching on topics that are extremely relevant, how are you guys keeping the conference forward thinking? How are you mining for that information?

Eric: Right, so there's sort of two ways to building a conference. First, there's the speakers. And I don't want to give away my black book but- we've just been doing this for five years and from the magazine, we know a lot of the operators. It's a regional business so in each region of the country or in L.A., we're planning our L.A. event where we're reaching out to the top owner, operators in Washington State and Oregon and California and Arizona and Chicago for the Midwest.

So, we know who the players are and there's a lot of new players. We don't all know it ourselves because we talk to some of the investment brokers, developers. We're in touch with those folks everyday and we have relationships with them and say, hey, do you know so and so? So, we can't get credit for being the know it alls.

From a content standpoint, we're always going to have panels on the state of the industry with some of the biggest names in the region, some of the operators panel, an investment panel, a development panel. I'm going to say that our content is almost like a mini NIC where it's real estate and operations focus with a little finance thrown in.

But, we change content for our folks. So, we added a getting good data which is sort of like a market studies panel that's been very popular with our audience because we tend to get a significant real estate crowd and that's been attractive to them.

Lucas: Yeah, I think one of the great attributes to the industry, because I've worked in other verticals in the past, is just the access and the people in the business that are willing to and are open to collaboration. So, for you guys to put this event on and bring in regional players and even bring in people and have such an attractive that even brings outside the region people in is a testament to the industry, it's a testament to what you guys have done here at Interface and it's an honor to be here and to be apart of it.

Eric: We appreciate that and we appreciate you guys for supporting us and the partnership. I think for a lot of us once the partnership is built, this is like the party day. We just open up the doors and we hope that a lot of people are having good conversation. I got a couple hugs today. I feel good.

Josh: Yeah, well, you're a great host. You've been all over the place running around. So, it seems like you kind of thrive on this. You're getting some positive energy off of it.

Eric: It's a little bit of adrenaline junky, yeah.

Josh: Well, for our listeners, they can't see the power foods and drinks that are on this table. You're fueled by chocolate cupcakes and Diet Coke. So, you know where it's coming from.

Eric: You can't let a good cupcake go to waste.

Luca: Well, it's been a pleasure to be here, to round out our year of Interface conferences and we look forward to bridging the gap next year at all the Interface events and so thank you Eric and also to your partner Rich for opening the doors to us and developing a collaboration that's been a lot of fun.

Eric: We look forward to working with you guys again.

Lucas: Awesome. And thanks everybody for listening to Bridge the Gap.

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