

2022

TOP WOMEN IN TRAVEL & HOSPITALITY



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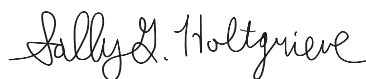
I cannot wait for you to get to know the incredible women in the pages that follow. The stories, insight and advice provided by the 2022 Top Women Leading Travel & Hospitality honorees speaks to why they received this honor. These leaders share with both confidence and humility. They analyze their past as well as offer details into their plans for the future, all while absolutely owning their current roles. And what a wild present it is to be in, especially in this industry.

The women featured in this report represent the many sectors of travel and hospitality, including airline, airport, hotel, cruise, shared economy, tourism, outdoors, and more. Seriously, they're making positive changes everywhere: land, sea, air. Despite their varied work environments, you'll come to recognize that they have a lot in common. My favorite noticeable trait? Persistent optimism. The challenges presented by nearly two years of COVID restrictions haven't daunted these leaders. They're still planning and identifying ways to better serve their travelers and guests, executing upon these strategies, and keeping their teams motivated in the process.

The best part is they're also sharing how they manage these feats. Read about the steps they took to develop as leaders; the obstacles they overcame to reach the apex of their career; what they're doing to attract and retain more female talent to their organizations; how they're advocating for diversity, equity and inclusion; and more.

Considering this array of leadership talent, the future of the industry looks bright. I hope this 2022 Top Women Leading Travel & Hospitality report inspires you to stay strong and continue working toward your professional and personal goals. Here's to all the future Top Women honorees as well. I hope to see you in these pages soon.

Best,



Sally Holtgrieve
Senior Editor
Women Leading Travel & Hospitality



LISA BAUER

CEO AND PRESIDENT, STARBOARD CRUISE SERVICES

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

I've had the privilege to be inspired by some great role models throughout my career. I tried to emulate the behaviors and actions that I admired. I was also very fortunate to be in corporate development plans such as building on talent or working with an executive coach.

When I saw the opportunity, I raised my hand for stretch assignments in areas that were out of my "comfort zone." And I greatly value 360-degree feedback, so I ensure that all audiences have channels in place to provide feedback.

Finally, I try to seek out opportunities in the hospitality industry to participate on panels, speaking engagements or town halls to network and learn from peers.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

My career has been rooted in various sectors of the hospitality and travel industry (airline, hotel, cruise and leisure travel). I've proudly held many leadership positions within top-tier companies such as Delta Airlines, International Cruise & Excursions (ICE), and Royal Caribbean International.

That said, I've faced countless challenges as a female executive in a male-dominated industry. For instance, during my airline career, I encountered gender bias — most assumed my role was a flight attendant and not at the corporate level.

With patience and resilience on my side, I took action. I built mutually beneficial alliances and strategic relationships with male and female industry leaders. Despite the unique challenges female leaders encounter in all industries, I believe women have pushed through barriers, boldly and positively, impacting the corporate landscape to support the next generation of women to reach their full potential.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

Gender-diverse companies are 15 percent more likely to outperform national industry medians. Companies should develop and implement work models that increase agility, address changing worker demands, and promote gender equity in the workplace. There's also an immediate need for training in unconscious bias.

As the largest global cruise retailer and market leader, Starboard Cruise Services lives for curating vacation retail experiences and creating meaningful memories. As part of LVMH Moët Hennessy, I'm proud to say that LVMH is composed of 53 percent women leaders and has committed to DEI for many years. In 2007, LVMH launched employee resource groups as a means to advance women leadership roles within the company. It has since expanded with additional strategies and a comprehensive DEI road map that continues evolving today.

How would you describe your leadership style?

It all starts with our people and culture. Since my first day as CEO and president, it's been a personal mission to establish a clear vision; build a work culture where everyone feels empowered; enable diversity to drive fresh thinking and innovation; and encourage peers to contribute to Starboard's growth and success.

When COVID-19 impacted the cruise industry, my priority was the welfare of our staff on ships and arranging travel to get them back home. We stayed in touch with our ships and offshore teams by hosting 'town hall' meetings where colleagues could ask questions of leadership, ultimately building respect and trust. I also continue to have daily leadership team meetings which keep us well informed and connected.

How do you recharge?

Traveling and experiencing new cultures; golfing; spending quality time with my husband, Bob, my six dogs, cat and several chickens on our ranch in Miami.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

At Starboard, we know that our differences are precisely what make us stronger. DEI is an explicit part of our planning processes and an essential piece of our culture and business.

In early 2020, we spearheaded a strategy and road map that would outline our DEI efforts, with clear accountability, governance (C-Suite Executive Sponsors) and assigned D&I leads (certified by Cornell University, sponsored by Starboard). The objective is to guide initiatives that support our business strategies and foster diversity, equity and inclusion; a collective sense of belonging for all stakeholders through robust business resource groups; equitable people process; ongoing education; and consistent opportunities for awareness.



The creation of three internal business resource groups were instrumental throughout the pandemic. By raising awareness and providing safe spaces for our employees to share their experiences, a strong sense of community and employee engagement was fostered.

- EllesVMH (focus on women)
- AILLVMH Pride (focus on LGBTQIA+)
- H.U.E.S. (Humans United for Equality & Service, focus on People of Color)

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

Professionally, we're approaching the year with vigor and additional digital integrated capabilities to exceed consumers' expectations — which continue to rapidly change post-pandemic. As a company, we're challenging each other to listen, educate, strengthen and empower our business resource groups to think big and bold for our future.

As it relates to our people, we want to build upon our progress and expand beyond recruitment to ensure that we have more inclusive and equitable processes with regards to retention, career development and more.

“Gender-diverse companies are 15 percent more likely to outperform national industry medians. Companies should develop and implement work models that increase agility, address changing worker demands, and promote gender equity in the workplace.”

— Lisa Bauer, CEO and President, Starboard Cruise Services



CAROLINE BETETA
PRESIDENT AND CEO, VISIT CALIFORNIA

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

I wouldn't be a CEO without the mentorship of some remarkable people. It's very important that aspiring leaders proactively seek out mentors and pay attention when help is offered. When I was relatively new to politics and tourism, Gov. Pete Wilson and his secretary of commerce, Julie Meier Wright, placed their confidence in me to help launch the organization that became Visit California. Their trust and guidance — and a lot of additional help along the way — empowered me to take a leap forward in my career.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

Getting Visit California off the ground meant rallying direct business competitors as well as politicians from different sides of the aisle. When the initial legislation was drafted almost 30 years ago, tourism was an afterthought in the state. There were a lot of valid concerns and opinions as we drew up plans to create Visit California.

Finding common ground required not just gaining a deeper understanding of shared pain points, but getting a foot in the door with a lot of high-profile individuals. What really mattered, however, was keeping the vision for Visit California as our singular goal. I was asking people to support a vision that solved mutual problems.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

First, the tourism industry values female leadership and has made good progress on this front in my lifetime. Visit California's executive team is half women, and about two-thirds of staff are women. The first industry-elected chair of our board was a woman. This existing representation is key to bringing more ambitious young women to tourism, as they can see themselves reaching the very upper echelon of the industry.

How would you describe your leadership style?

I see myself as a coalition builder. Building coalitions helps Visit California serve a diverse group of interests, but it also brings about stronger, more lasting solutions. We have a representative board of directors, and we create industry steering committees to guide every major initiative. The collaborative and inclusive culture permeates even smaller activities at Visit California. For example, we facilitate conference delegations that include a wide range of California destination partners, so it's not just Visit California speaking on behalf of the state.

That said, there are times when it's critical that I step more visibly into the role of ambassador and spokesperson, such as when a crisis calls for a more centralized messaging effort — for example, around responsible travel during the pandemic.

How do you recharge?

Travel. I don't just say this because I'm in the industry. Travel is immensely important to my well-being and, I believe, to everyone's. Most Americans don't use their paid time off, which is why Visit California offers financial incentives to staff to actually take vacations. I too struggle to step away from work. I have to remind myself that leisure travel helps me center and makes me more productive.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

One of California's enduring appeals is its cultural diversity and spirit of inclusivity, which is why Visit California has adopted the motto "All Dreams Welcome." I mention this because you need a staff that reflects the diversity of California's residents and visitors for this message to ring true. Visit California is continuously striving to develop an organization that fully reflects California's incredible diversity. Visit California's staff-led diversity and inclusion team identified opportunities to make our company more welcoming to everyone, from rethinking our hiring practices or just the experience of visiting the office. You can see our commitment to diversity and "All Dreams Welcome" across our online, print and television marketing.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

The top challenge on everyone's mind remains pandemic recovery. Right now, Visit California is rolling out its first dedicated B-to-B professional meetings and events platform, "Meet What's Possible." The stakes couldn't be higher. The state's tourism economy depends on business and group travel, along with domestic leisure and international travel to return to pre-pandemic levels. Many businesses and destinations depend on conference and "bleisure" revenue, which all but vanished during the pandemic.

Visit California and an industry coalition premiered the program in November at IMEX America, which is the largest meetings and events trade show in the country. Dozens of event planners and executives shared insights and gave feedback, as did the tourism leaders from California's top business travel destinations. The added focus on marketing to event planners is a learning and growth opportunity for me and the organization. The potential for this program to further spur recovery has me truly excited for 2022.



YAA BIRAGO

CEO AND CO-FOUNDER, FEMMEBNB INC.

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

As a leader, being a visionary is important, however, I make it my intention to listen to the input and feedback from my team, advisors and mentors for continuous development. I strongly believe a great leader purposely serves from the background. I make it a priority to be a servant first in order to elevate, motivate, mentor, educate and guide my team.

In the past 18 months I've been exploring the power of vulnerability as a leader. Vulnerability has been something I've struggled with in the past. I was raised in an environment where I was conditioned to keep everything to myself, good or bad! In my perspective, vulnerability was a sign of weakness. In the past few years, however, I've been unlearning and learning about the power of vulnerability with boundaries as a leader.

I've made it a priority to incorporate sharing gratitudes at the start of my weekly team meetings. Thus, it has opened up some important conversations, created a positive/no judgment work environment, and has also allowed my team to know me better as a leader.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

One of the key obstacles I faced early in my career is the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has been one of the hardest obstacles many leaders in travel have had to face and make tough decisions in their career. Although it was a hard hit, I ensured my company explored significant innovative paths to remain sustainable through the pandemic. We've been able to sustain our business by cultivating our community through digital activities, such as our monthly recurring Women in Travel Virtual Meetup & Sip, where we connect with women who love travel and discuss all things travel. Subsequently, we've been able to grow our communities to over 60 percent since the pandemic and cultivated over 14,000 followers across our social media platforms.

We've also used this opportunity to create more awareness and amplify the mission of Femmebnb and promote local travel through our platform. Although the pandemic

has greatly affected the travel industry, the trend of local travel and trips has been on the rise. We've been leveraging this trend as a sustainability strategy. We've been able to strengthen our brand during this pandemic by promoting local and sustainable travel to help support businesses by building the economy in communities. Our current innovative focus encourages more connections and sustainable travel to help reduce the carbon footprint as well as help lower the spread of future infectious diseases.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

We need to create more dialogue to amplify the importance of gender-inclusive culture in the (short-term rental/boutique hotels/serviced apartment) industry. In addition, we need programs that focus on providing equitable opportunities, resources, mentorship, and promote women into senior leadership roles. Some strategies for change include getting boards of directors involved by making women's advancement a priority; making sponsorship programs for emerging women leaders transparent; and providing more family-friendly policies in the workplace.

How would you describe your leadership style?

A combination of affiliative, democratic and coaching. I always put people first, I'm transparent, and I seek opinions from co-workers before making significant decisions. In addition, I strive to create an inclusive, welcoming, fun and enjoyable work environment for all.

How do you recharge?

Reading books, spending time away from work, and changing scenery via local or international travel.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

As a woman founder and a POC, diversity and inclusion has always been my priority since the inception of Femmebnb. I've made it my mission to create a work environment where diversity, inclusion and integration is ingrained in our office culture. I'm very intentional about every person I bring on my team, as team diversity helps us make better decisions and creates an inclusive and innovative workplace and products.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

My company's first strategic goal for 2022 is community building and outreach. We will continue to leverage social media to cultivate a trusted women's travel community, online and offline. Our second strategic goal is partnerships. Leveraging on partnership opportunities will enable us to grow our user base and amplify the mission of Femmebnb and the importance of safe spaces for women. Although the pandemic has greatly affected the travel industry, the trend of local travel and trips has been on the rise and we will leverage this trend in 2022 as a sustainability strategy. This will allow us to strengthen our brand during the pandemic by promoting local and sustainable travel to help support businesses by building the economy in communities. Our current and future innovation is dependent on robust technology to support user growth and increase traction in the company.



ROCHELLE “CHELLIE” CAMERON

CEO, CITY OF PHILADELPHIA -
DIVISION OF AVIATION (DOA)

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

The seven years I spent in active-duty service in the U.S. Air Force is one of the most influential aspects of my career that has shaped me into the leader I am today. My experiences instilled in me the strong belief that every individual is important to the success of the bigger mission — a concept that has been passed down from the Air Force culture and has been a guiding principle in my career journey.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

Public speaking has never been one of my favorite activities, but I realized early on in my career that I had to develop that skill. I spent 10 years with the Toastmaster's International program improving my comfort level when addressing a large crowd. I've never forgotten the favorite saying of one of my fellow Toastmasters: "Although you can never eliminate the butterflies in your stomach, you can learn how to make the butterflies fly in formation!"

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

As my good friend and fellow transportation leader, Leslie Richards of SEPTA, has said, you must "see it to be it" when it comes to having women in leadership roles. When you can't see it, it's hard to imagine yourself doing it as well. Having mentors, sponsors, and role models — both men and women — is critical, as well as physically seeing women leaders in the path you want to follow. At a time when nearly 3 million women have left the workforce amid the pandemic, mentoring girls and younger generations is particularly relevant if we want to grow the pipeline of women entering the workforce.

How would you describe your leadership style?

I aim to be a consensus builder. My colleagues, regardless of which position or title they hold, are all pieces of the puzzle in solving the day-to-day challenges of running a busy, large hub airport like PHL, which is why I've always taken a straightforward, collaborative approach to leading our team.

How do you recharge?

I always have a good book on hand. I recently finished "Fifty Words for Rain" by Asha Lemmie and can't wait to start the latest round of books in the Next Big Ideas Club. "The Sweet Spot" by Paul Bloom looks like a really great read!

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

Silence and inaction from a leader on important matters such as racism, diversity, equity and inclusion are deafening and unacceptable. I've grieved, along with my colleagues at PHL, for the profound and senseless loss of Black life that we have and continue to witness. We stand firm in our commitment to fight racial inequity and understand that this pledge must extend beyond words. In late summer 2020, I convened my fellow leaders to craft a plan of action and develop concrete steps to take as an airport community. The team encouraged recommendations, thoughts and ideas from employees. In response we've established the Racial Equity Advisory Council (REAC), which is working on a long-term racial equity strategic plan that will address areas for growth within and around the Division of Aviation.

As we continue on this necessary journey together, I'm confident that the Division of Aviation will serve as an example to the aviation industry that we can and must do better at advancing racial equity. If any city in the country is poised to lead this effort, it's Philadelphia.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

No industry has been more greatly affected by the pandemic than travel and hospitality. We're still a few years away from a full COVID-19 recovery, but the busy holiday season, the reopening of international travel, and the prospect of airlines launching new routes and resuming previous service make us optimistic for 2022. We're committed to making the airport the best it can be for our guests. We're also thrilled to continue the advancement of our air cargo development program, which will establish Philadelphia as a logistics center and drive the creation of thousands of new jobs.



LISA CROUSE

CEO, CANVAS MEETINGS & INCENTIVES

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

To become a better leader to those around me, I try to follow these few steps:

- Always be honest. There are appropriate and inappropriate ways to be honest. I strive to provide honesty in a respectful manner
- Lead with positivity. When things get stressful for my team, I always try to ensure they see the light at the end of the tunnel.
- Commit yourself. If you don't believe in the mission, then those around you won't as well. I'm extremely confident in our ability to produce unforgettable events and meetings, and my team knows that they're the real superstars.
- Never stop learning! I try to surround myself with people smarter than me; they're the best to learn from. Leaders who think they know everything are doing their employees a disservice. There's always more to learn.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

In the beginning, my college degree didn't match my career path. The lack of a business degree often made me feel insecure as I pushed forward. I quickly learned that my relationship skills were my greatest asset and the rest could be learned along the way. Now when I talk to colleagues and industry friends, no one has a degree that matches their career, yet they're finding tremendous success.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

I truly believe actions speak louder than words. Anyone can easily say they support women, but how do they do that? Companies that really care will ask and listen to their women employees. What's important to them? Pizza parties on Friday or a flexible schedule? A company's culture is extremely important and must be constantly reviewed and improved.

To attract more women talent, companies should have inclusive benefits and appropriate salaries. More importantly, ask potential employees what they're looking for. If you're offering something that isn't important to them, then it isn't an incentive for them to work for you.

How would you describe your leadership style?

Accessible, compassionate and encouraging.

How do you recharge?

Time away from work is so important. I recharge by moving my body! Biking, hiking and teaching yoga always help me balance out sitting at a desk for a large part of the day. I live on a small farm with our two very funny goats, Sadie and Clover, who also keep me busy!

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

The most important part of DEI is understanding what it means. I advocate for diversity by keeping an open and safe environment for my team to be their real selves. Each team member brings their own religion, sexuality, gender and race to work each day and we celebrate that.

I advocate for equity by making sure everyone on my team has what they need to be successful. Some require different working hours due to their productivity times, others prefer more time to process change and new business. Assuming everyone needs the same thing to be successful isn't helpful.

I advocate for inclusion by inviting my team to be a part of crucial decisions on the work we do and how we do it. Instead of requiring everyone to work the way I prefer, I let them make their own decisions on how to execute the planning and project management. Beyond letting them determine the best method, we knowledge-share and celebrate the many ways to be successful and learn from each other.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

My plan next year is to transition out of the CEO role at Canvas Meetings to play a more supportive and mentoring role for the great young leaders in our company. I'd like to dedicate time on employee empowerment, continue to work on new business development, and expand our Canvas Cares initiatives. I watched my team come out of the pandemic better than before and I cannot wait to continue to watch them grow.





DOROTHY DOWLING

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, BEST WESTERN® HOTELS & RESORTS

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

I personally believe that everybody is responsible for their own development. I've always made a commitment to myself to invest in learning. That's a lifelong journey for me, as I believe it should be for most of us.

For me, learning might be focused on people leadership, subject matter expertise, or business leadership and understanding how to drive business outcomes. It's a personal commitment that has transpired through both formal learning opportunities — such as continuing education courses — and informal opportunities like creating time to read each and every day.

I believe that we need to stay on top of our game. This is the most valuable thing we can bring to our teams and organizations, but most importantly, it's one of the most important things we can do for ourselves.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

When I look at the very beginning of my career in the hospitality industry, leadership roles were almost exclusively male and there were never female mentors in those leadership positions that I could look up to. As a result, I really leaned into my peer mentors. Over time I was able to develop relationships with those peers through industry organizations and we've supported each other from a career development perspective throughout the years.

Unfortunately, this obstacle is still present for many women in our industry. One of my greatest concerns is that women haven't broken through at the levels we should have seen by now. Of course, the fallout of the pandemic created a significant setback for women advancing, especially in our industry.

As I look to the next generation of leaders and what I can do to help remove these same obstacles for them, I've become more committed to paying it forward — because I can't pay it backward. I'll always be a spokesperson and ally for women. I hope to bring a voice and perspective that can shape consideration for other women.

I firmly believe that if you can see it, you can be it. In that regard, I've made it a priority to embrace diversity in everything I do in my personal and professional life. Diversity in leadership brings different perspectives that drive organizational growth, allowing us to be better leaders for our employees and in Best Western Hotels & Resorts' case, our hoteliers, too.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

A staggering 57 percent of the hospitality labor loss resulting from the pandemic was women. The pandemic forced women to take on tremendous familial obligations and put unthinkable strain on the female workforce. I believe a fundamental shift in how we structure work is essential as we focus on retaining and attracting more female talent.

This is why the concept of "returnship" is so important to me. We must be more thoughtful in how we structure our work to allow women to bring their whole selves to work, all while balancing the other parts of their lives — whether that's motherhood, daughterhood or whatever else it might be.

While this isn't a female-specific issue, it is a more acute issue for women. Women took the brunt of the responsibilities through COVID and many are still carrying those responsibilities today. Until our society is able to bridge all of the familial needs that we have in today's environment, we must be more open to thinking differently about our work.

How would you describe your leadership style?

Over time we all evolve our leadership style. My main goal is to be a servant leader and understand that my job is to help others bring their best capabilities to their roles and remove obstacles for others to succeed.

How do you recharge?

For me, I recharge by spending time with my family, fur babies and dear friends. It's such a privilege to spend time really connecting with those closest to me and enjoying the beautiful community we're a part of. I'm fortunate to have a group of close friends that have been part of my life since childhood, and they continue to be some of the most cherished individuals in my life.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

For the women hotelier community it's critical that we provide formal learning programs and network opportunities for women to learn from each other, hear from each other, and feel validated in challenges they face in their day-to-day work. This was the founding principal behind Best Western Hotels & Resorts' "Women in Leadership Forum," which I hosted for the fourth time in 2021. This annual event celebrates the vital role women play both inside their organizations and out, and delivers relevant content for today's women in business.

In order to successfully deliver these learning opportunities to women, I'm committed to my own personal growth in learning about DEI and continuing to be a voice and advocate for DEI in our industry.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

Some goals are constant, like my continued commitment to personal and professional development, while others become focal points at various points in my life. As I look to 2022, I'm focused on prioritizing the most important things in life. That means traveling less and spending more time with family, friends and teammates. One of the great silver linings from COVID is that it provided clarity for many on their priorities, myself included.

In our industry it's easy to live each day with a sense of urgency — we all know that a hotel room today cannot be sold tomorrow — and as a result we sometimes forget how important the people in our industry really are. I've always believed that relationships are the currency of life and that was certainly proved true during the pandemic. I have a keener appreciation for the relationships in my life, and in the year ahead I plan to focus on family, friends, teammates, and industry colleagues in a significant way.



MICHELLE MCKINNEY FRYMIRE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CWT

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

I believe that there are several key factors in developing your leadership skills, some of which aren't unlike developing any other skill:

- Be willing to work at it. Read, talk to others you respect and admire as leaders, take feedback from your team, your peers, your coaches and mentors, and others, and then work to incorporate the best of those things into your style.
- Be willing to meet others where they are. Your style needs to flex to meet the needs of diverse teams and teammates, not the other way around. Each person you're leading will have different needs. It's your job to meet those needs, not their job to conform to your style.
- Become a great listener. Actively listening for both what people tell you and what they don't say is so important to being a good leader. You have to know what motivates them, what matters to them, and why they're there. You also have to listen to what you don't hear. When someone isn't talking passionately with you about their work or their team, that says a lot as well.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

In my early career I benefitted the most from taking on a few challenging roles, even if they weren't necessarily the next career step I had planned for myself. While this wasn't an obstacle, it was something I had to consciously choose to do. Or when pushed in a direction that I wasn't sure about, I had to choose to lean into these opportunities and make the most of them. It sometimes meant overcoming obstacles like moving to a new city where we didn't know anyone to pursue these challenging roles, and I think I was able to do that because I had a great partner in my husband. Your early career is the best time to take risks, take on new and different assignments, or take a chance and change companies or jobs. All of the experiences and skills you gain in doing that will benefit you so much later on when you're managing larger groups or larger scopes of responsibility.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

I think the things we must do to recruit and retain more women are the same for recruiting any talent. It starts with offering them challenging opportunities, while at the same time being flexible to their individual and unique needs — whether those relate to work/life balance, childcare, work location, health, or any other issue.

Furthermore, helping them grow and develop by taking chances on them, letting them work on new and exciting opportunities even if they don't have the background or training; investing time and energy in helping them succeed in a stretch assignment. And last but not least, creating a workplace culture where they feel that they belong. This is so critical to retaining great talent. They have to feel like they belong there and are important to the success of the team. Their differences have to feel like strengths, not reasons they can't succeed.

How would you describe your leadership style?

I think people would say I'm collaborative and flexible, but that I have high expectations for myself and others. In general I'm direct and transparent, but willing to invest time in helping my co-workers succeed. I try not to rely on just one style or



approach, but be flexible to what my team needs from me. It's important to me that we treat people respectfully and handle mistakes with grace. We're all imperfect, so we can't expect others to be perfect. However, we can demand they give their best to what they do, admit their mistakes when they make them, and continue to work to learn and grow.

How do you recharge?

Outside working hours I love spending time with my family and my dogs. That's probably my favorite nonwork activity — anything with my kids or my husband. When my kids were younger, I loved going with them and watching them do what they loved — playing sports, acting, singing, whatever brought them joy brought me joy. I also enjoy reading. I read pretty extensively on a wide variety of subjects, both fiction and nonfiction.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

In addition to the comments I made above, one of the key things I believe is critical in advocating for diversity, equity and inclusion is to speak openly and loudly about being allies for traditionally underrepresented groups like minorities and LGBTQI+ individuals. It's critical we create initiatives that sup-

port these teammates, such as employee resource groups, diversity recruiting, training programs and diverse slates of candidates for every promotion. This isn't just about talk, though. We have to make DE&I initiatives part of our measurable objectives. We have to hold ourselves accountable to ensuring our workplace is somewhere that every employee can be their best and real self.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

2021 was a challenging year for CWT, and our entire global team did an amazing job delivering on our promises, supporting each other, and ensuring CWT was positioned for a great future. As a result, my goals for 2022 are very focused on our people and how we take care of them because they're the most important part of CWT. We have a big year ahead of us, including making some significant investments in our product and technology offerings. This is incredibly exciting, but means we have to continue to grow and build our team around the world. I'm also focused on continuing to deliver great experiences for our clients and their travelers, which means continuing to enhance our service offerings and ensuring we're constantly evolving our investment plans.



KRISTIE GOSHOW

CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER, KSL RESORTS

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

I must admit I often wince at the term “leader.” From my perspective, it’s associated with many old guard stereotypes. The very question implies we must follow a methodical and calculated approach to qualify. Perhaps it could be reframed as, “at what point did I realize my skills could drive change, performance and value for others and, in turn, inspire me to become a lifelong enabler.” For me it was when:

- My college educators let our class down and I told them so.
- I witnessed bullying culture in the workplace and knew we all deserved better.
- My confidence had to outperform my fear during an in-flight bomb threat and emergency landing while operating as cabin crew with Virgin Atlantic. Many lives were depending on me.
- I took to the stage for my first ever speaking opportunity.
- My talented team and I bore the unfortunate consequences of a corporate restructure and downsizing.
- A broken team opened their arms to me; we shared the pain and rebuilt together.
- My child didn’t win but had to get up and have another go.

My role as an enabler for others continues to be the sum of many moments. As life-long learners, we must embrace uncomfortable and ambiguous situations, invest time with others through associations and industry networks, and reflect often and acknowledge that leadership can be silent, vocal, nudges or headlights. And the “steps” are a continuous journey.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

Confidence, plain and simple. Like many women at a young age, I lacked self-assurance. This was further compounded during my early career by those who didn’t use their words wisely or behave appropriately in positions of trust. Over time, I’ve benefited from informal mentorships, which have helped guide my interpretation of past experiences, taught me to embrace them, derived the learning, and reframed to my advantage.

Much like competitive sports, I relish the power of a surprise play. We must own our future, design our individual road map, celebrate achievements, and show the world how we wish to be treated (credit to Shawn Stoute, Preferred Hotels & Resorts).

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

Let me start by expressing my sincere disappointment because we’re still asking this question in the year 2022. That said, we absolutely must keep asking the question until it becomes redundant and irrelevant. Collectively, we should oblige our industry to:

- Engage with educators. Address the root cause for our limited talent pools. Many of my male peers are working diligently to improve diversity and inclusion within their teams and companies, but we’re simply facing a shortage of equally qualified female candidates. And I deliberately choose the words “equally qualified” because I’ve always believed we must recruit the best talent for a position. We don’t help ourselves if quotas overtake qualifications. Through extensive partnerships with educators, sponsorship programs, internships and apprenticeships, we can feed our future.
- Celebrate our differences. Women represent half the population and possess many amazing differences. At the top of our list is the ability to procreate. We can grow and carry the future of humankind. That’s epic. The notion that we must compete and resemble our male counterparts simply denies our unique traits and skills.
- Revisit our language and outreach. Do our job descriptions resonate? Are we leveraging recruiters who understand the female audience?
- Balance the board. Tom Peters said it many years ago and here we are still witnessing a vastly tilted boardroom: “Does my boardroom look like my customer base?”

How would you describe your leadership style?

My role is to enable and clear the path, inspire and motivate, help others realize their true potential, and handle the toughest of conversations with the greatest of respect. To this end, I oscillate my leadership style based on the culture of the business I’m operating within and the diversity of stakeholders involved. On occasion I will lead from behind, but in all cases it will be “on a level” with my team, garnished with a sprinkling of happy dust!

How do you recharge?

Life in general is my lightning rod. As a naturally curious individual, I love to observe the world unfolding around me, deriving much happiness from the possibilities to iterate a service experience or a product opportunity. I can honestly get lost in the “what if” conversation with myself. It’s oddly nourishing.

Spending time with my children is the most precious of all. They remind me to grow down. Their joy of life and unfiltered perspectives ground me — regularly. They are my ultimate recharge.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

It’s important to make DEI an innate part of our day-to-day operations and overall “way of being” vs. a “program” or “business goal.” There are many ways to grow and strengthen DEI, and nearly all are within our direct sphere of influence:

- Include everyone in the conversation.
- Lead by example.
- Balance the narrative.
- Identify platforms to create opportunity, visibility and voice (Women Leading Travel & Hospitality is a great example).
- Apply learnings from my own experience.
- Dispel stereotypes.
- Ensure the tough conversations receive airtime. For example, why are there no female CEOs at the helm of the top 10 hospitality brands or world’s top airlines?

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

This is where I giggle to myself. Somewhere at home languishes a “Kristie’s Book of Big Ideas” that’s been a work in progress for the last 10 years. This is the basis of my goals every year!

2022 will see me add crypto and NFT exploration, move to a new home and community, and position KSL Resorts as a brand synonymous with evergreen performance. Lastly, but possibly the most important goal of all, claim time for me — time to “think deeply for a change.”

“Women represent half the population and possess many amazing differences. At the top of our list is the ability to procreate. We can grow and carry the future of humankind. That’s epic. The notion that we must compete and resemble our male counterparts simply denies our unique traits and skills.”

— Kristie Goshow, Chief Commercial Officer, KSL Resorts



LAURA HELTEBRAN
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER, WHEELS UP

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

When I was a freshly minted attorney in the '90s, the tools and programs available to young professionals today didn't exist, especially for a young female working in the tech space. Initially, I learned by observation. I took note of leadership styles and attributes that I liked and worked on incorporating them into my own brand of leadership. I've been privileged to work with some of the best world-class HR organizations and have benefitted from programs designed to optimize leadership team functionality. Some individuals may dislike these exercises, but I find them to be amazing opportunities to increase self-awareness and better understand those around me. Communication is the foundation of any high-functioning leadership team and receiving a 360-degree perspective on how my communication style best interacts with others has been a gift.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

Mine is a "best laid plans" story. During law school I planned to become a real estate attorney with a firm. I ran out of money during my third year and took a full-time law clerk position with MCI Communications Corporation to make ends meet. I had no background in technology and found myself in the litigation department of a major technology company. It was really intimidating! My only choice was to learn the business as quickly as I could. I'm naturally curious and there's a psychology element to understanding what motivates our clients. The moral of the story is to consider every option that comes along even if it seems like a stretch. MCI ended up offering me an attorney position when I graduated, an unusual move as in-house teams are not staffed to train new attorneys.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

Progress has certainly been made since I started my career, but there's still so much to do. Companies need to do more than preach DE&I objectives. The tone is set from leadership, and having a leadership that demonstrates gender parity is a

great beginning. Placing women in key leadership positions that aren't the typical "token female roles" helps. Succession planning should take into account opportunities for advancement of women in every level and ensure that women are offered the same development opportunities and career care as men.

How would you describe your leadership style?

In addition to being really smart people, my favorite leaders have demonstrated friendliness, hope, compassion and humility. They've taken the time to get to know me and what I want out of my career and life. I try to lead with those traits as a starting point. I'm willing to admit my mistakes so others know it's alright to make them. Doing so underscores that it's OK to be vulnerable, which can be scary for women. I lead with confidence and a strong sense of right and wrong, and work hard to get people rowing in the same direction. My favorite quote from Ruth Bader Ginsberg, who is my hero, sums up my leadership philosophy: "Fight for the things you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

How do you recharge?

As an introvert who is often mistaken as an extrovert, many are surprised to learn I recharge best by myself or in smaller groups. My favorite activities include fitness, I think in part because physical activity is a stress outlet for me. I love the gym, cycling, and getting away to places where clean eating and activity is the main objective. Stress does such a number on the body, and when I feel the physical effects I pay a visit to my favorite massage therapist. I love taking off my work hat to spend time and be present with my two children, family and friends. I find that focusing on others is a great way to leave day-to-day stress behind.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

As chief legal officer, it's my job to support the efforts of our HR and growth teams, and of course I wholeheartedly support our efforts in the DE&I space. As a publicly traded company we will be measured on ESG, with DE&I efforts being squarely in the "S" of that acronym. I ensure this conversation happens regularly at the board and C-suite level. Additionally, I know I can vote with my wallet and I choose outside counsel and other vendors with an eye toward their commitment to diversity.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

Successfully leading a company through an IPO in 2021 will be tough to top in 2022! My main personal goal is to focus on better work/life balance. Balance can be elusive — it's important to recognize it and know when to reset and recharge. Professionally, I look forward to having time to focus on continuing to build out the legal function, and to helping the company navigate its first full calendar year as a public company. I think the next big professional goal is to be selected to serve on a public company board of directors. There's no better preparation than the front row seat I've had standing up our public company board and governance, and it has been a pleasure to work closely with the fantastic board of directors we have at Wheels Up.



MARISOL HILL
OWNER, ADVENTURE RV

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

I started working at 16. As I quickly moved to different positions in the same company I learned the challenges every position faced. Once I was promoted to management I was able to not only identify the company's weaknesses, but understand that it's vital to listen to employees' concerns and challenges in every position. Developing trust with employees, knowing the company's ins and outs, and listening helped us as a team to reach goals never accomplished before.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

I would say being in a male-dominant position in the RV industry. You don't see many women towing travel trailers or driving massive RVs. I was able to move forward by simply letting it empower me every time a male questioned my ability while hooking up or setting up a RV during campground deliveries. Even my presence online in the RV industry is commonly challenged as a woman. Instead of firing back I continue to share my knowledge as I stand to empower and educate others to the best of my ability.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

As the world is constantly evolving, so should companies. Now that work from home has become a popular model it might be something that women might find appealing since they may have multiple hats to juggle.

How would you describe your leadership style?

I would say my leadership style is visionary. Listening to my team's ideas and concerns has been vital through my different careers. Finding ways to make them feel appreciated and heard so that they can stay motivated and productive has been key to having everyone in the team heading in the same direction.

How do you recharge?

If I'm not singing karaoke with great friends I'm recharging by camping in one of my RVs with my husband and four kids. Listening to a river, birds or sitting around the campfire and listening to the fire crackling and watching the flames dance has a way of reminding me why I do what I do.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

As a Latina I've experienced some of these issues in my previous workplace. As my company grows I will ensure my staff recognizes everyone's gifts and strengths before judging someone based on their color, culture, race, religion, gender, etc.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

As the RV industry continues to grow it's important that we meet the needs and demands of the business as well as the demands for families to continue to enjoy the outdoors with their loved ones. My goal for 2022 is to find a lot to lease where I can expand to provide RV rentals and repairs.





SHANNON KNAPP

PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE LEADING HOTELS OF THE WORLD

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

I never charted too narrow of a course for my career. I personally don't believe that success always follows a linear path; it doesn't only go up the ladder. Some of the most vital lessons I learned in my career were because I chose to take lateral roles that diversified my experience, exposed me to different kinds of business challenges and customers, and opened doors that might never have even been options otherwise. My varied experiences helped me refine my career aspirations because I gained a thorough understanding of the types of roles that I liked and, as importantly, the ones I didn't. I try to approach every new challenge as an opportunity to learn something to improve my capabilities — even negative experiences have much to teach us if you have the right mindset.

Another factor critical in my development as a leader is the invaluable counsel of several outstanding mentors I've had throughout the various phases of my career. It's hard to overstate the impact of authentic, constructive relationships with mentors who will be honest with you, will challenge you, and who are invested in your success in the long term. My mentors changed the trajectory of my career, and it would be one of the greatest accomplishments of my career if I could impact someone else's life the way that mine has been so positively impacted.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

I wasn't a classically trained marketer. In fact, I was an international relations major in college with designs to work in foreign service. But for myriad fortuitous reasons I ended up in an entry-level job at a world-class marketing organization and I had no choice but to learn how to build the plane while flying it! I took classes, read books and tapped into the many company resources available, however, I quickly realized it was through the day-to-day interactions with my outstanding colleagues that I was gaining the most valuable experience.

To recognize and appreciate that every interaction can contribute to your personal development was an indispensable lesson to learn early in my career.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

I think there are several actions companies can take to attract and retain more women in the workplace. The most important action you can take is to start from the inside and then work your way out. In my experience, your company culture dictates how your company shows up in the market for others. Specifically, we need to take an honest look at the cultures we, as leaders, are cultivating in our organizations.

Is it a culture of inclusivity, empowerment, flexibility and transparency? What behaviors are we rewarding overtly and subliminally? Do we have an explicit strategy to actively recruit, but more importantly, develop and reward women? Are we creating growth opportunities and modeling the behavior for women — i.e., are women in leadership positions in your organization? If not, why? It's very hard to be what you can't see, so think about the message a lack of representation means to women in your organization. At Leading Hotels, generations of intrepid females have paved the way for extraordinary women in hospitality. I'm proud to share that with recent management appointments the composition of our senior leadership team is 50 percent male and 50 percent female, and so is our workforce. We have an unprecedented opportunity coming out of this global crisis to build a new and more inclusive future, and I'm optimistic we will finally see meaningful progress in diversity, equity and inclusion in our industry.

How would you describe your leadership style?

I'm an authentic leader who thrives on building collaborative teams with complementary skills to accomplish extraordinary outcomes. For me, the best part of what I get to do every day is develop and lead people to accomplish more than they realized they could. I derive great pride from the accomplishments and the successes of my team, and I'm consistently motivated and inspired by my colleagues' personal and professional commitment to our customers and our mission.

How do you recharge?

I have a five-year-old and a three-year-old at home, so between leading a global hotel company in the midst of a worldwide pandemic and managing life with two little kids, suffice to say things are a bit hectic in our home. To recharge, I try to take a vacation once a quarter with my family, during which I do my best to disconnect from work. In fact, I just planned my first quarter vacation this year, and as usual, it's somewhere warm, with a beach and a Leading Hotel, of course!

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

A core tenet of Leading Hotels is that travel changes and connects people for the better. Our company is about people. Deepening relationships. Celebrating individuality. Building community. I'm proud to lead an organization where diversity, equity and inclusion are at the heart of who we are.

For me, whether it's sharing my unique perspective as an LGBTQ+ leader or supporting organizations that drive change or actively engaging with colleagues in discussions about inclusivity, I'm personally and professionally committed to fostering a culture of respect for all people.

Together with my colleagues, we are working towards creating a future where the discussion is no longer focused on diversity, equity and inclusion because it's the norm to have representation at all levels in the workplace.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

Professionally, my focus remains on empowering our community of independent hoteliers to stay independent. The majority of our member hotels are family-led, many for generations. Our hoteliers are artisans of hospitality whose expertise, commitment to excellence, and individual flair allows them to create unmatched travel experiences for their guests. Together with LHW's management team and our worldwide colleagues, I'm committed to ensuring this remarkable segment of hospitality and our outstanding hoteliers accelerate out of this crisis so they can continue to make the choice to stay truly independent.



LISA LUTOFF-PERLO

PRESIDENT AND CEO, CELEBRITY CRUISES

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

I'm not sure leaders are developed; I think leaders are born. At least that's how I think of the leaders I've seen and worked with and for. I always think that those that I admire have innate qualities and others who are leaders really shouldn't be. They just don't have the gene. That said, I've continually worked on trying to be the best leader I can be. I've evolved over time, gotten feedback that has helped me hone and develop further, and have also learned to accentuate and minimize my leadership style and qualities depending on the circumstances.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

I believe the biggest obstacle I've faced throughout my career, not just early in my career, is being underestimated by some people that were important in me achieving my goals and aspirations. I turned that into motivation to prove them wrong. I'm someone who always finds a way to turn a "no" into a "yes." I believe determination and persistence have been my best attributes in navigating my way to achieve what I've wanted to achieve — both personally and professionally.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

Be purposeful about it. I think many companies and leaders pay a lot of lip service to diversity and improving the gender gap. I've made it a priority of mine so that other women can accomplish what they want to and deserve to accomplish. I've surrounded myself with people who feel the same way, many of them men. We've walked the talk and significantly improved gender balance within Celebrity, both ship and shore. Our bridge teams are at 30 percent women. Seven years ago, when I was appointed to this position, we were at 3 percent. The maritime industry is at 2 percent. I'm tremendously proud of this accomplishment, and we're a better and more successful brand because of our focus on improving the gender gap in this very male-dominated industry.

How would you describe your leadership style?

A courageous, inspirational, innovative, determined, strategic, passionate leader who leads with my heart as much as I lead with my head. I care greatly about paying it forward and helping all of us accomplish things we didn't think were possible.

How do you recharge?

Creating space for myself, compartmentalizing, constantly rebalancing my priorities, and sleep.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

This is part of who I am. I'm a strong believer in diversity, equity and inclusion. I practice what I preach and demonstrate my commitment in everything I do. I'm the first and only woman in our company's C-suite and on our executive committee. I happen to work in an organization that shares my beliefs and I have the ability to influence our progress with my colleagues on the executive committee as well as throughout the organization.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

My goals for this coming year are really simple. We have to bring our brand back to the success we were having before the pandemic shut us down. The team I have the honor of working with every day is as passionate as I am about this. We will bring all of our ships back into service at some point in 2022, and that will be a very rewarding accomplishment. On the personal side, I'm looking forward to recalibrating and like so many others, putting the trauma and difficulties I've faced over the past two years (both personally and professionally) behind me and focusing on the bright future ahead.

**NANCY MAMMANA**

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, NYC & COMPANY

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

While in graduate school, I wrote my thesis on the idea of leadership and outstanding qualities of particularly great leaders. It was during that process that I realized the key is really to recognize greatness in others in all its various forms, and then find ways to cultivate and empower those you work with to use that greatness as much as possible every day. Also, self-awareness is key. Know what you don't know and always keep learning. I've tried to live by both of those things, and work hard to recognize them every day since.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

I've always followed my instincts when making career choices. I followed my gut as I've moved forward, which then led me to unexpected places at times. It's served me well, but the irony is that as a result, I struggled a bit in finding my niche. Marketing is so broad with so many possible areas of focus; I found myself building a career as a generalist, which sometimes worked against me when going after jobs that I thought I really wanted. Somehow, however, it ultimately worked in my favor in the best way possible. I was told by my current boss at NYC & Company that proclaiming myself to be a generalist, which I hesitated doing for fear of being seen as not having a specialized area of expertise, is what ultimately sealed the deal on my job offer, as that was just what the company needed. So, it just goes to show you, don't be afraid to call out your true strengths!

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

Representation is key, of course. I think the first step is to pay particular attention to the women already within the organization and find real ways of providing them with a career path and opportunities to shine and develop. That will pay short- and longer-term dividends as they grow within the company, and can then hopefully serve as real proof points in the marketplace. Female candidates will notice if there are women with meaty roles within the organization.

How would you describe your leadership style?

I suppose you'd have to ask my team to get the real answer on that one, but I've always tried to walk a fine line between helping with the day-to-day and letting go to empower



and let them do what they do best. I try to provide the right amount of input where needed and stay abreast of everything that's happening, while not getting in the way. I also try to always remain a resource and help to remove obstacles. When they succeed, I succeed, so I try to do whatever I can to be a support system for the minefields that inevitably happen along the way.

How do you recharge?

Other than watching "Seinfeld" re-runs, I really focus on two things to recharge: cooking and dancing — two things I've always loved in life but have only gotten deeper into them over time. I love to cook, for myself or others. I find it so relaxing. In New York City there are too many other options if you find it stressful, but for me it's therapeutic. I've also been a dancer my whole life — the third generation in my family — and have done competitive Latin ballroom dancing for the past 10 years or so. Both are the only things I do that totally put me in the zone and focus my concentration. I think we all need that outlet.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

I've personally learned so much since all of the social unrest that came to a head with the murder of George Floyd in 2020, and continue to learn every day. We've undertaken a

number of DEI initiatives within the company and have a lot more to do. Ultimately, I try to take special care in recruiting and bringing on new employees that represent the diversity of New York City. And since there are limits to the amount of people we can hire, we try to ensure that the work and content we produce also accurately and equitably represents all the cultural diversity that makes New York the incomparable city that it is. You can't really experience New York City without experiencing the vast array of cultures here throughout our neighborhoods and boroughs, and it's our responsibility to share that with the world.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

After all the utter insanity of the last two years, I look forward to finally being in a position of planning in 2022. We've pushed out an astounding amount of excellent work during the pandemic, but have largely been in triage mode and it's been challenging for all of us. I'm now really excited for all of us to take a breath, assemble our resources, and start some strategic planning in the new year. While we know we're not out of the woods yet, we all look forward to a fresh start and forward motion in our recovery as individuals and as a city.



MICHELLE LARDIZABAL

CHIEF SALES OFFICER, NORTH AMERICA, AZAMARA

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

My first role out of college was as an assistant manager. Being 22 and managing largely a team of women twice my age, I learned a lot and fast, especially the difference between managing and leading. Over the years and with the last two decades in the travel industry, I've developed my leadership style through many different roles and working for various companies. There's something special about this industry, and finding your passion in an industry plays an important role in your authenticity as a leader. Passion for what you do helps one become a good leader. I feel grateful to have found a home in the cruising industry, and I'm excited to have joined Azamara, where I plan to share my knowledge, expertise and industry relationships to help my team and our business to continue to grow.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

I started my professional life in travel retail, traveling around the globe in the process, which was amazing at 23. Whether traveling for business or doing business in travel, there are typically surprises. You've got to roll with the punches, think on your feet, and be prepared for anything. I was also fortunate to start my professional life under the tutelage of strong, smart, professional women. They became my mentors, so when I saw them or our business hit obstacles, they instituted thoughtful, objective stances and powered through it. They showed me not to be afraid of "difficult" conversations or situations; tackle them with thoughtful solutions and keep going.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

We need more women in leadership roles. One way companies can retain and attract more women talent is to hire qualified women for leadership roles, and compensate them fairly. As a brand with a female president at the helm, Azamara is dedicated to furthering its strong existing female presence on its leadership team. Additionally, I'm a huge advocate for mentorship. Women in the workplace need to champion each other — support each other for a common goal, help and guide each other when needed, and give recognition when it's due.

How would you describe your leadership style?

Highly engaged. One of the most important qualities of an effective leader is communication, so I really try to be transparent and effectively communicate with my team. I've found that meaningful conversations and executive visibility within my team tends to go a long way with trust and productivity. At the end of the day, building relationships internally is just as important as building external relationships, and when you work hard for your team, they'll likely give you the same in return.

How do you recharge?

We live in what seems to be a non-stop 24/7/365 global world. Recharging is critical both professionally and personally. I'm a bit of a mix — I love being with my family and friends enjoying life, going for a run or spin, but also a great book in a quiet space.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

Diversity and inclusion are so important for the workplace. At Azamara, it's built into our DNA as we aim to bring our guests deeper into destinations for a better understanding of the vast cultures of the world. Being based in a city as diverse and full of culture as Miami, it's also so important that our leaders are representative of our home. Women and people of color make up more than half of Azamara's executive leadership board, allowing diverse voices to not only be present, but amplified.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

Personally, I live by a family first motto, ingrained in me by my parents. Making sure I'm there for my family and those I love is always top on my list every year. Professionally, I'm new to Azamara and am thrilled to be an actor and contributor as we look to stand up this independent cruise brand. My goal is to enable my team to deliver the best experiences with Azamara for our travel partners, be great stewards of our company, and make this a place to work and contribute for many, many years to come.



RATHI MURTHY

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER AND PRESIDENT, EXPEDIA SERVICES, EXPEDIA GROUP

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

I like to define my leadership journey using a couple of themes. One of the most important is authenticity. Be yourself, identify your strengths and play to them.

Others include:

- Be fearless. One of our Expedia Group corporate values is 'choose fearlessly,' and it's something that's guided me throughout my career. Don't be afraid to try new things, learn from failures, and always have a growth mindset.
- Competency is table stakes. I spent a lot of time (and continue to do so) ensuring I understood all aspects of technology. Knowing your craft is key to gaining trust and respect as a leader. Early in my career, I took a 'jungle gym' approach, dabbling in all technology areas (quality/release engineering, database architecture, customer support, and operations). Knowing both sides of the house — operations and engineering — makes you a better engineer!
- Find a mentor. Leverage mentors to help you grow and sponsors to be your voice in forums where you can't be present.
- Be there for others. Good leaders exist to support others and enable them to grow!
- Be genuine and great at what you do. Followership is key!

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

I took a somewhat atypical approach to my career. After undergrad, I had kids and put myself through grad school while they were young. So I didn't start my career until several years later than my peers. In some ways, this was an obstacle because I came into the market with less corporate experience but with more practical and life experience. I used this to my advantage by being authentic and absorbing any and every technology area I could to hone my craft. Studying while raising a young family also develops solid problem-solving and multitasking skills!

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

I believe a multifaceted approach is required and that it needs to start with the hiring process. I'm proud that Expedia Group is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment for everyone. We've innovated our talent attraction and hiring process by driving inclusivity and removing bias and discrimination from the process. One small but powerful example is mandated mixed-gender interviewing for candidate slates and interviewing teams.

Two of the most effective ways to retain talent are mentorship and communities. As mentioned, mentoring is near and dear to me because I've benefited from it throughout my career. Now, I never decline an opportunity to mentor another woman. I am who I am because of the support I received — it helped me find my voice, build confidence and grow in my career.

Communities are also vital. At Expedia Group, we call them Inclusion Business Groups, safe spaces offering support and communities focused on creating a sense of belonging. Our Women at Expedia Learning & Leading (WELL) IBG strives to empower and support women to develop and grow into leadership roles through professional development, personal empowerment, and strategic initiatives.

How would you describe your leadership style?

I base my leadership style on a set of core beliefs shaped by my trek to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro:

- Set your vision high ... but make your journey one step at a time.
- Enjoy the journey ... don't get stuck on the outcome.





- Embrace everyone and everything supporting you through your journey ... we all have a part to play and contribute to overall success.
- One team, one dream ... we need to support each other. Together we always win!

How do you recharge?

I'm an avid practitioner of yoga and meditation. And, unsurprisingly, I love to travel! Once a year, my family takes a trip together. We've been doing this since my now-adult children were toddlers. I find that time to reconnect with my loved ones while experiencing new cultures, traditions and adventures re-centers and re-energizes me.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

It's essential for leaders to be actively involved in existing programs and even create new ones. For example, I recently participated in a reverse mentoring session for socio-economic diversity. Employees had a forum with senior leadership to have an open and honest conversation about socio-economic privilege, nontypical career paths, and diversity in educational background. I left with a new perspective on these issues and action items that I will deliver to make Expedia Group an even better place to work.



In November, I visited our offices in India and hosted a conversation with our women in tech. I wanted to create a safe and supportive environment to talk about challenges, opportunities, wins, and lessons learned to help each other grow in their careers. Additionally, I will take on executive sponsorship of one of our Inclusion Business Groups in 2022.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

Having joined Expedia Group in May 2021, I currently have three professional goals for this year:

- Build out the Expedia Group travel platform .
- Build a strong team.
- Have fun while leading this large-scale transformation!

And my personal goal is to play my part in building a stress-free corporate America. Especially in this current environment with many stress-inducing factors, such as the pandemic, etc. I teach yoga and meditation in my free time, so my aim is to help and support the people around me.



MALAIKA MYERS

CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER, HYATT

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

I've (almost) always said yes to opportunities, whether it was a new role, a task force, a project, etc. If it was something new or different, I had a strong bias to yes and that really helped me gain new experiences and skills.

I took lessons from every leader I worked for or around. No one is a perfect leader, but most leaders have something to offer if you pay attention. Maybe it's the way they're fully present in conversations, or their skill at drawing ideas out through questions. I try to pay attention to the leaders around me to identify and mirror the skills and traits that will make me better.

Lastly, I learned early on the power of focus. I've participated in many development programs throughout my career, read countless books on leadership, listened to webinars, podcasts, etc. Too often you come out with a laundry list of things you could work on strengthening. I try hard to focus on one thing at a time and to remember that sometimes finding ways to leverage something you already do well can have more impact than trying to build a completely new skill.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

The biggest obstacle I faced early in my career was all about who I was. I graduated with my MBA at 22 years old. I was young (and looked it!), I was black, and a woman. I wasn't who anyone expected to see in the roles I was in. To say that there weren't many role models is an understatement. I was fortunate to work for several leaders that helped me to find my voice. I also found other women who were experiencing similar feelings of isolation, and we forged strong bonds that continue today. Many people struggle with feeling different from the "norm" or "expected," maybe it's your race, religion, or the schools you attended. I learned early on to lean into my "different," to own it and celebrate it. Ironically, doing that helped me feel more connected.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

Attracting and retaining talent, especially women, is incredibly important for Hyatt — and the greater hospitality industry — to build back stronger with more diverse representation and leadership.

To accomplish this, advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) at the top levels of leadership must be a priority. This means more women at leadership levels at Hyatt properties, in our corporate offices, and among the hotel owner community. It also means more inclusive leadership behaviors from all leaders at all levels. At Hyatt, we're committed to focusing on hiring, promoting and retaining diverse talent to increase representation of women. We've articulated a goal to double the representation of women in key leadership roles by 2025. We believe that setting goals and tracking progress are key to achieving change. We understand that we must start at the beginning to achieve this and will continue to audit our hiring and promotion processes to ensure diverse candidates are delivered in the selection process. We also believe it's important for other companies to put in place similar processes to ensure a more inclusive environment for all.

Recent research data indicates that one in four women are considering leaving the workforce or downshifting their careers. We need to focus on what it will take to retain women in the workforce. From 2017-2021, I co-chaired our Women@Hyatt Diversity Business Resource Group (DBRG), which ensures Hyatt is a workplace where women can be their best selves through support, networking opportunities and career development programs. These types of groups are critical to ensure women feel supported. They also provide a forum for companies to hear what women need to thrive. For example, in closely listening to our colleagues, especially those serving as caregivers during the pandemic, we developed several new programs to support well-being. This includes the implementation of Hyatt Well-Check, a mental health tracker developed with experts at Cornell University. Hyatt Well-Check helps colleagues better understand the state of their own mental well-being over time with a quick and confidential assessment that provides individualized results and recommendations to address any of their needs.

There's an equation we use often at Hyatt when we talk about our purpose: Empathy + Action = Care. Empathy and action are what it will take to attract and retain more women.

How would you describe your leadership style?

Collaborative, inclusive and supportive. Nothing is more satisfying to me than knowing I've played a part in someone's leadership journey and growth. Like many leaders at Hyatt, I'm striving to have my personal leadership style closely reflect Hyatt's core beliefs of empathy, well-being, inclusion, and experimentation, along with our purpose of care. We call these beliefs our "behaviors to build."

We start with empathy — which has always been the core of who we are — but especially this past year when we saw colleagues embracing empathy as a starting point for their work, as well as an entry point for connecting with guests. Next, we prioritize well-being and ensure that our colleagues have the resources needed to care for themselves. Much of



that is based on the individual, but we've also put in place global resources like free access to guided meditation with Headspace and our mental health tracker called Hyatt Well-Check. Third, we practice inclusion at every level of our organization. Personally, I'm proud to oversee the significant strides Hyatt has made in areas of who we employ, who we support, and who we buy from and work with. Finally, we come to experimentation, which I believe is the mindset that has fueled me personally and has been our strength during the recovery period. Adapting a more nimble, agile approach to our overall operations and leadership has been key to weathering the pandemic and emerging stronger than we were before.

I focus on being mindful of these behaviors and have weaved them into my day-to-day leadership tenets so that Hyatt provides welcoming environments and extends care to each and every individual in our business.

How do you recharge?

There are a number of things that I do to support my own well-being. First among them is exercise. I try to make time at least four days to five days a week to strengthen my body. Sometimes this is hard-charging cardio or circuit training, and sometimes it's a long walk through my neighborhood. I also read for pleasure almost every day. I typically do this in the evening before bed. I find it helps me to gear down from the hecticness of the day and prepare for rest. During the pandemic I went back to a childhood hobby of puzzles. When I'm working on a puzzle I feel at peace — with no worries other than finding the one piece that fits the opening. The last thing I'll mention is sleep. Sleep is our body's natural recharge mechanism and I really try to honor that by getting sufficient rest.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

As the chief human resources officer for Hyatt some might think that advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion comes naturally for me, and in some ways it does. I've been advocating for underrepresented groups for many years, going back to when I co-founded the Minority Management Association in graduate school. However, I continuously challenge myself to be a better advocate and, more importantly,

an ally. Hyatt is a global company that welcomes colleagues and guests from all over the world. We must be deeply involved in actions that contribute to a more diverse, inclusive and equitable society.

Advocacy starts with empathy and then moves to action. In the summer of 2020, after closely listening to our Black colleagues and gaining insight into how Hyatt could best address racial inequality in our own industry, we introduced Change Starts Here, a set of commitments to further accelerate our DE&I efforts in three areas: who we employ, develop and advance; who we support; and who we buy from and work with. We've held ourselves accountable to these commitments and set actionable goals through 2025, including goals focused on workforce representation, supporting Black communities, and increasing minority supplier spend, among others.

Hyatt also recently launched World of Care, our global environmental, social, governance (ESG) platform. It's designed to address pressing challenges faced by our colleagues, guests, owners and communities, and enact meaningful change within our industry. World of Care's three pillars — caring for people, caring for planet, and caring for responsible business — are pivotal in driving the direction and focus of our company in today's world.

Within World of Care, we've further positioned DE&I as a top business and workplace priority. For example, I regularly connect with colleagues through roundtable discussions and encourage them to also connect with each other on shared values within our eight diversity business resource groups (DBRGs). We've also created an emerging leaders development program in our ASPAC and EAME/SWA regions to help focus on career development for women, and engaged our global workforce to complete our Leading Inclusively workplace training to recognize, understand and respect diversity and promote inclusion. Lastly, we asked all incentive-eligible colleagues to set at least one individual measurable goal focused on DE&I in 2021.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

Personally, I plan to treasure every moment with my daughter, who will be spending her last full year at home before going off to college in 2023.

Professionally, I plan to lean in even more into Hyatt's Behaviors to Build — empathy, well-being, inclusion and experimentation as we continue our diversity, equity and inclusion journey. In my role, I'm always striving for greater accountability. When we launched our World of Care platform in July 2021, Hyatt publicly disclosed its global gender and U.S. racial and ethnic workforce representation for the first time within our inaugural DE&I Report.

This was an important step in our long history of DE&I and reinforces the importance of communication, transparency, and empathy. It's also critical to ensuring accountability for our Change Starts Here commitments. We made a promise to share progress on workforce representation on an annual basis moving forward, and in 2022, I will work alongside my colleagues to ensure that we keep diversity at the forefront of our practice and create an inclusive environment that extends care to all.



KATHERINE O'DONNELL

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, RICHMOND REGION
TOURISM

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

For me, leadership growth has taken place through experience and professional development. In my 20 years at Richmond Region Tourism, I've worked at nearly every level of the organization and department. Each role that I've served in did not previously exist in the organization. This experience taught me a lot about creating new initiatives, setting vision, and building consensus and trust. Experience coupled with structured leadership programs such as Leadership Metro Richmond and the Center for Creative Leadership's Leadership Development Program have informed who I am as a leader today.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

I used to fear public speaking. As an English and journalism major, I was much more comfortable writing than speaking early in my career. Over time, as my role changed from marketing to community relations, public speaking became a mainstay of my work. So I hired a professional. I worked with a public speaking coach to learn how to tell compelling stories to live audiences. She was so helpful that I hired her for a workshop for the team as well. And then I practiced out loud. A lot. In the car, in my office, with colleagues. The high point in that journey was giving a keynote address at a LGBTQ+ tourism conference, after which a couple attendees told me they got tears in their eyes. Now, because I speak so often — and still practice — I don't get nearly as nervous.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

The pandemic has demonstrated that workplace flexibility is key. I see that to be true for attracting and retaining talent overall, but women in particular. Given the data showing that women are more likely to assume additional responsibilities at home, the more flexibility companies can provide about how, when and where talent can work, the more attractive they become.

How would you describe your leadership style?

My No. 1 priority is the people on the team. My philosophy is to hire talented, smart, kind people and let them forge their path. My role is to set a vision and high-level priorities, and then empower the team to achieve.

How do you recharge?

As an extroverted introvert, I recharge with time by myself, with my family or close friends. I weave together faith, fitness (recently hot yoga), family travel, dinner with friends, and curling up with a good book as my ways to recharge.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

Diversity, equity and inclusion is at my core. First and foremost, I consider myself an ally and work to impact change wherever possible. Nearly 10 years ago, I launched OutRVA, a community-driven campaign to welcome LGBTQ+ travelers to Richmond. In 2019, I launched BLK RVA in partnership with community members to shine a spotlight on the Richmond Region's Black-owned tourism businesses. Both campaigns are designed to shift outdated perceptions about Richmond, welcome travelers, and drive spending to minority-owned businesses.

Similarly, diversity, equity and inclusion is at Richmond Region Tourism's core. We have a very diverse staff and board of directors. Of course, more work can always be done. Internally, I spearheaded Richmond Region Tourism's work with a DEI consultant to put in place a climate of inclusion survey, conversation cafes and a global DEI benchmarking process, as well as staff, leadership and board training. That effort evolved into an internal DEI taskforce, on which I'm the senior team liaison, that's putting in place strategies to enhance our DEI efforts.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

One of my goals for 2022 is to take control of my calendar and have fewer meetings! The pace of back-to-back meetings perpetuated via Zoom during the pandemic isn't healthy or sustainable. I'm carving out work time to ensure I prioritize what's really important — including yoga once a week.



JANE POYNTER

FOUNDER, CO-CEO AND CHIEF EXPERIENCE OFFICER,
SPACE PERSPECTIVE

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

As the co-CEO of Space Perspective, a human spaceflight company that has re-imagined space travel to an elegant way for people to have the quintessential astronaut experience of witnessing our planet in space, I strive to nurture a learning posture. We're bringing the world's first luxury space travel experience to market, and we measure our success by our rate of learning — learning about our customers and their expectations of what they yearn to experience during their journey to space; learning how to make our Spaceship Neptune's inherently safe technologies even more secure (instead of rockets, we use a SpaceBalloon that travels to space at 12 mph); learning to recognize my own superpowers and my kryptonite while supporting our team members along that continual journey of self-discovery. 'Know thyself,' a short phrase that engenders a critical and sometimes uncomfortable process of becoming an even better leader and member of our human family, is one I consider central to my growth as a leader.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

I was privileged to be on the design team and first crew to live inside Biosphere 2, the world's first human-made biosphere whose mission was to be the world's first laboratory to learn about planet Earth and to serve as a prototype space base. Within the hermetically sealed three-acre chamber we grew all our food and recycled all our water and air. We literally drank the same water repeatedly. The plants that filled our small world provided us our oxygen and we their CO2 to grow. I had the profound experience of being viscerally and literally part of my biosphere, which gave me the expanded perspective of being a crewmember of our planetary biosphere, Spaceship Earth. It's why I'm so focused on our mission: to take as many people as possible to space to see our planet from an expanded perspective.

What I hadn't counted on while being in Biosphere 2 was how difficult it was going to be being enclosed for two whole years with seven other people without exiting the structure.

We didn't work well as a team, which was profoundly surprising, painful and counterproductive. My husband, Taber MacCallum, was also a crewmember and has been my business partner for over 30 years. That experience left a lasting impression on both of us and is why our team is at the center of what we do. Business is a human endeavor, and we must never forget that.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

I'm proud of the extraordinary team we're building at Space Perspective. Our head of SpaceBalloon manufacturing has been responsible for producing NASA's innovative and safe SpaceBalloons. Our head of launch has flown more balloons than anyone else on Earth. The person leading Spaceship Neptune's capsule production was responsible for SpaceX capsule manufacture. Our heads of customer experience and marketing come from beloved luxury brands. Some have been with Taber and me for 15 years, and hold the world record for the team that flew the highest human under a SpaceBalloon. And the list goes on.

What I'm especially proud of is that we have significant and increasing diversity of all kinds in our team. Aerospace has historically been very male. For decades I was often the only woman in the room. We have the happy situation of having a woman co-CEO, and so attracting diverse employees comes naturally. Prospective employees need to see diversity in a company's leadership to believe we mean it. And for us, having team members with different backgrounds leads to fresh thought, innovation, creativity and sometimes magic.

How would you describe your leadership style?

Having a magnetic vision and communicating it clearly and with passion is core to any leader's practice. At Space Perspective, our team is dedicated to giving millions of people the transformative experience of seeing Earth in space, which creates a deep connection to our one human family living together on Spaceship Earth. Imagine a society where people have this view; it will change things for good forever. Every one of us at Space Perspective knows that we're part of something much bigger than ourselves, and that sense of purpose inspires all of us to drive harder and further, together.

How do you recharge?

Exploring our planetary biosphere and the human family that inhabits it grounds me and gives me energy. I particularly love to dive. Visiting the alien world underwater where whale sharks the size of a school bus glide by just inches from me without my feeling the water move at all around their enormous bodies reminds me that we're but one remarkable species among millions of other extraordinary creatures. We're all interconnected on this spectacular planet, and that sense of connection is why I want to take people to space — to see it for themselves. Astronauts speak of the profoundly moving experience of seeing Earth in space, the thin blue line of our atmosphere illuminated against the velvety blackness of the void. They realize deep in their bones that this is a finite world, and that we're all in this together, hurtling around the sun on our spaceship Earth. They feel a deep connection to our

planet and the human family that inhabits it. It's that sense of interconnectedness that drives our mission at Space Perspective and buoys me personally.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

The very vision of our company holds that we're a singular human family on Earth. Differentiators are cause for celebration. For the first time in my career, I'm surrounded by women and people who speak with different accents and multiple languages. It's thrilling and inspiring. At Space Perspective, we strive to look through the titles to the human. That's true not only for our team members, but for our customers and partners, too.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

In 2021 we had a picture-perfect test flight of our Spaceship Neptune capsule simulator through the full flight that our explorers will experience in 2024. We put tickets on sale in June 2021 and have already sold over 500. For the first time, flights to space may be purchased online! In 2022, we're building and flying our Neptune capsule and refining our customers' experience from now through their flight to space and beyond. Because of the safety and comfort of our space experience, we're finding that this is becoming a social experience with groups of friends and family all going together to have this incredibly rarefied experience (to date under 600 people have been to space). The journey to space starts from the moment a customer puts down a deposit to go. Our focus is to make the entire journey with us mind-blowing and meaningful.



MALVINA VONTA

CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER, VARIETY CRUISES

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

From early on in my career, I realized that a key driver for success is to have a positive can-do attitude to transform any task into something great and to bring my whole self to work. Since becoming a leader, I've encouraged my team to do the same. Take ownership, be present, love what they do, and take on new challenges that will help them see the wider picture while still being attentive to detail. In the midst of the pandemic, I took on the role of chief commercial officer at Variety Cruises. Taking on such responsibility in an ever-changing environment made me want to strive to remain a positive influencer and change agent, ready to take risks and make decisions as a team that will impact our business in both the short and long term. To do so I followed three key steps.

The first step is to have a strong vision and goals which are clearly articulated, not only with my immediate teams within Sales, Marketing and Product Development business units, but also to all the rest of the Variety Cruises teams on board and on shore. Often people are motivated but uninformed, so I've found that to lead and inspire people towards a goal, I want to be as transparent and specific as possible. The second step is to lay the foundation for driving diversity of thoughts, skills and experiences amongst my team members. While I'm a hands-on person who is naturally driven to partake in the day-to-day work, it's important that my team is involved every step of the way to achieve better outcomes, both for themselves professionally and for the business as a whole. The third step is to remember to remain agile. This is something I learned from playing chess — you need to be laser-focused on your strategy while still looking at the bigger picture. To do this successfully on a day-to-day basis, I try to compartmentalize my week functionally — starting my mornings with one-to-one or team meetings and limiting meetings and calls to particular days to allow time for thinking and strategizing. If I were to give one piece of leadership advice, that would be to act instead of react, to think one step ahead in order to drive innovation to not only to stay afloat but sail towards new and exciting future opportunities.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

I'm fortunate to have started my career with the organization I still find myself in, where passion, inclusion, coaching and also recognition have been key values advocated by numerous people I've been working closely with since 2013 when I joined Variety Cruises, a third generation family-owned business. A key challenge I faced early in my career was a lack of confidence. I've overcome this by being consistent and patient, as well as by making strong connections and real friendships at work.

My greatest mentor has been my father, Yiannis Vontas, also one of my earlier direct managers. I've learned from him the importance of never letting the learning curve flatten out by taking up new challenges for the job to continue to evolve and challenge myself to outdo myself. I've followed strong leaders along the way, including the company's founder, Lakis Venetopoulos, who tragically passed away last year. He taught me the importance of listening first, allowed me to learn next to him and take on projects which weren't always part of my day-to-day job description, encouraging my creativity in introducing new initiatives. This allowed me to stand out in the company while creating lasting partnerships, which in turn helped in gaining confidence to achieve greater goals. All dots connect.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

It has been encouraging to see the shift in many companies in attracting more women talent while also providing them with a platform to excel in their position and target leadership roles. Companies, especially those dealing with direct consumers and travel experiences, put a great deal of effort into collecting consumer data and in reinventing their product to deliver on their promise to attract and retain their customers. The same effort is to be put into attracting the right candidates and more women talent. Be willing to provide flexibility to support family-work balance. Invest in developing mentorship programs within the organization. At the same time, I see it as a two-way street and recognize the necessity of women raising their hand in leading the next project or applying for positions even if they seem not to tick off all qualifications or previous experiences.

How would you describe your leadership style?

Optimistic. My life and career have proved to me that to inspire others and yourself requires an undying belief that the future is bright. Energetic and passionate, having a 'yes' approach to ideas for innovation and change in order to keep teams engaged and achieve a more diverse workforce with great outcomes related to belonging and testing the edge. I've always aimed at leading by example and in communicating with sincere excitement for Variety Cruises business and vision to create a 'Better World at Sea.' I share monthly departmental updates with the entire office and ship teams to celebrate team success and bridge communications between our teams and offices in Athens, New York, London and on-board our ships. While being a leader is more or less 'dancing through' the various interconnecting roles of leading, managing and coaching, I mostly enjoy and strive to coach the team, share my passion and knowledge for small ship travel, and support in a nonintrusive way, providing a platform for the team to develop and bring their ideas to the table. If you create space for other people to perform, you're on the right path for a growth mindset culture and eventually growth of the organization and its impact.

How do you recharge?

I aim to find ways to recharge both within the workplace and in my personal life. At work I set aside some focus time either on my own or in teams to consciously reflect using time and space wisely to gain insight; time dedicated purely to brainstorming, envisioning new campaigns, product development. This helps tremendously in viewing work as a source of

growth and inspiration, and not treating work as just work.

In my personal life, I'm blessed to be surrounded by a big family and friends I've had for life. As a Greek native, it comes as no surprise that I often opt for weekends to soak up the light of the Greek islands, only a couple of hours away from my home in Athens. I love visiting art galleries followed by long walks to re-explore my city, Athens. Staying creative, curious and inspired is critical to refuel my passion for what I do and how I wish to inspire others around me — family, friends, teammates and, ultimately, our travelers.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

I'm passionate about personally welcoming and mentoring new team members within the commercial department in Athens, New York and London, but also do the same for other departments. Also, the last two years have been proof that if you lead a team with trust and good communication, you have an engaged and agile team of people working from anywhere in the world. The latest job positions offered within Variety Cruises' Commercial team are optionally remote, and I very much look forward to further diversifying our team with members working with our Athens HQ from all over the world.

One of our core initiatives for 2022 is to further enhance our trip offerings to better suit solo travelers, the LGBTQ+ community, multigenerational travel, and more. Diversity, equity and inclusion in our team only translates into more diversity in our products and, ultimately, our travelers. Having a workforce that's representative of a blend of gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, and professional and social backgrounds should be as natural as breathing, and travel serves that purpose. It's what the world looks like and it's what our travelers look like. Our teams at Variety Cruises, from marine operations to sales and marketing to product development all strive to deliver on our promise and values — a Family at Sea. It's only natural that the same level of attention and consistency is needed to attract and maintain diverse talents in the team, who will in turn take care of our travelers and our product.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

Most of my goals for the year are consistent with the ones I've had for the last few years — I've accepted that transformation and leadership takes patience through action. People I've worked with know my all-time favorite quote: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

Communication, clarity, feedback, technology and innovation are the areas I'm focusing on more. Professionally, I very much look forward to the successful launch of Variety Cruises' rebrand, followed by our new website, a guest application and online booking engine, while redefining our product delivery and mix with new small ship sustainable experiences. I will be working closely with our people team in developing a mentorship program within the company. Last but not least, strengthening and expanding the projects and goals of the Variety Cruises Foundation, VARIETY CARES, is among our top priorities for the years ahead. Following the build of a school in Gambia, there's more we want to do in the destinations we're sailing while also actively advocating for diversity and cleaner oceans through our small ship experiences across five continents. Stay hungry, stay curious is my motto for the year ahead.



TRACIE WINBIGLER

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, AMTRAK

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to begin my career at General Electric where they had an excellent formal leadership development program. I took full advantage of the courses that it offered and participated in the program throughout my time there. I realized early on that I needed to actively pursue challenging job assignments that would enable me to grow and learn as a professional, and that started with the Financial Management Program and has continued throughout my journey to my current role as the CFO for Amtrak.

Pretty early on I also figured out the value of investing in a career coach. I think a lot of people underestimate how helpful that can be for both personal and professional development. Over the years, I've benefited from valuable direct feedback, periodic 360-degree evaluations, and regular individual development plans that my coach and I have collaborated on. I'm also an avid reader — there are several great books out there that focus on leadership development. Two books I refer to often are “5 Levels of Leadership” by John Maxwell and “A Coach's Guide to Developing Exemplary Leaders” by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

I faced a fear of failure when I took a risk on a project outside of my comfort zone. Looking back now I recognize that I certainly made some mistakes, including empowering my team in a way that wasn't helpful to delivering the best results that we could have out of that project. I'm proud of the fact that I quickly recognized my mistakes, took responsibility, and then focused on applying those lessons learned when I took the next risk in my journey. I think it's very easy to lose your confidence, especially when you're just starting out, and then allow that to make you risk averse. There's very little growth potential in that. You simply can't know if things will work until you try them. The job of a leader is to pay attention and to be prepared to change direction if things aren't heading where they need to go.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

Companies need to create a culture of listening and valuing the women in their organization. This includes standing up an employee resource group (ERG) focused on providing tools to help women in the workplace. This is something I've been actively involved in throughout my career, including today at Amtrak where I lead the Notch 8: Women of Amtrak group. I believe groups like this provide professional development, networking, and mentoring opportunities across the enterprise. These groups can also do a lot to promote engagement and partnership with male allies. Programs that focus on unconscious bias training, family and wellness resources, technical training that really help build partnerships and engagement across the company. Over the last couple of years, as the country has managed through the pandemic, it has become clear that our employees, particularly women, really benefit from flexible work arrangements. Not only can they benefit, but I think we've learned that there's a lot that leadership can do to make adjustments that make it easier to retain and attract talent.

How would you describe your leadership style?

I focus on empowering my team to innovate, challenge the status quo, and find new ways to bring more value to the organization and the work the team does every day. I want to inspire my team to innovate and drive change through process and technology improvements.

How do you recharge?

I'm an outdoor enthusiast. I love trail running! My husband and I enjoy driving to the different mileposts along the C&O Canal to run on the weekends. I'm a bit of a bird lover, so I like to watch the blue heron, hummingbirds and woodpeckers while I'm on my run.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

Throughout my career I've been an active participant and leader in women's professional development. I'm the executive sponsor of Amtrak's affinity group for women called Notch 8 as well as a leader on the Amtrak Diversity Council to ensure that the enterprise has strong programs to support diversity, equity and inclusion. Additionally, I've been a mentor and coach to many women during my career.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

We talk a lot about infrastructure, but at the end of the day, Amtrak and transportation is about people, our riders and our employees, so my top priority for 2022 is to get out on the railroad with our employees. Amtrak is heading into the most exciting time in our company's history. Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Congress has said loud and clear they believe the country needs better, faster and expanded passenger rail. We're ready to deliver that! Our incredible team across the country has worked tirelessly to deliver essential train service through the pandemic. As we look ahead, our employees and passengers will be able to see and experience state-of-the-art investments in new fleets, more accessible stations, new bridges and tunnels, and more. I'm looking forward to being right beside them as those investments are rolled out.



JENNIFER YOUNG

CO-FOUNDER AND CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER,
OUTDOORSY

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

Leadership skills played a large role in my career and Outdoorsy's company development. We're growing so rapidly and it constantly takes new skills to keep up with the growth and changing environments. The first thing I did was invest in professional coaching. Coaching allows me to learn how to step out of my comfort zone and challenge myself to improve. I've learned that I grow when I'm open to being wrong.

I'm big on practicing discipline. A good leader needs discipline. I mapped out a plan for learning the leadership skills I needed to develop, such as coaching vs. driving actions and asking better questions. I'm being coached on creating situational awareness, resolving conflicts, and positively influencing others; encouraging and empowering them vs. doing the work for them. Another great way I develop my leadership skills is by taking on different projects and more responsibility in areas I'm not as familiar with.

I also strive to continue learning. I dedicate 10 hours/week to higher education and learning new topics across a variety of brand and marketing subject matter such as 1.) how to be a critical thinker, as good leaders can foresee potential problems before they happen and, 2.) learn how to more effectively listen. Being a discerning listener to provide feedback effectively to employees and customers is truly necessary to be an effective leader.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

Before starting Outdoorsy, I worked in the marketing world with global brands like American Express, Johnson & Johnson, P&G, DHL, and HSBC. I spent years climbing the corporate ladder searching for a career that I believed spelled success. This immense amount of inner pressure and endless days working my way into traditionally male-dominated boardrooms eventually led to the abandonment of my mental health. I had to dig deep during this time and think back to my care-free childhood, which was centered around nature, family and simple pleasures. I woke up one day and realized

these things were still very much at my core. Although I chose to pursue a tough career path, one that would be even more challenging to stop pursuing, I knew I would ultimately find comfort in returning to those simple pleasures, which is how Outdoorsy came to be.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

Being a woman in leadership, I can intimately relate to the value and importance of this subject. Hiring more women ensures that our workforce is representative of our customers — families who want to travel on safe, memorable outdoor experiences — and therefore allows us to provide better knowledge on consumer preference. Hence, we need women fairly represented throughout all areas of Outdoorsy. We believe in hiring women in leadership positions and make it a company value to recruit and promote women. We also empower female employees to shape Outdoorsy company culture. Many of our strongest leaders in the company that create policy and programs are women.

But this topic has significant, long-term goals we have to stay focused on. We're not doing enough. It remains a constant focus in leadership conversations, and I believe we should be doing more, which is something that keeps me up at night. More needs to be done.





How would you describe your leadership style?

I'm relentlessly optimistic, hands-on, demanding and inspiring. I'm focused on helping our organization thrive, so I spend more time putting the needs of my team first. I'm focused on developing individuals in order to perform their best and achieve our mission of making memorable experiences accessible to everyone.

Overall I love being real and hands-on, from working across our company to our community to customers, too. When my husband and Outdoorsy co-founder, Jeff, and I had the idea to start our company, we traveled for eight months in a 27-foot Airstream to learn all we needed to know about building our company. We interviewed more than 1,200 people along the way, everyone from first time RVers, van-lifers, park rangers and campground caretakers. I'm always down to hit the road to gather new and much needed consumer insights to help expand and grow our company. We did this again, moving into a camper for two months during the heights of COVID to travel across seven states to understand what needs had changed. I read every single customer review. The customer voice and feedback is one of the most important input metrics across our organization.

How do you recharge?

Recharging mentally is a skill I've been learning to do and develop. These are some of the top things I do:

- Overall I give myself permission to relax and take a break from technology (turn off all the notifications and do not check Slack, email or reply to text messages).

- I write down and refer to a list of my accomplishments and, similarly, I make a list of past mistakes and see them as growth moments and how far I've come.
- I do something fun, even as simple as listening to music, learning how to make a new charcuterie board, taking a bath, or watching a movie.
- I meditate and pray. I do this every morning and evening, but on days I'm trying to cushion myself, I make time for a full hour or two to stay in silence.
- And travel of course! Nothing beats time in wide open spaces. I'm Canadian and grew up in the '70s in a time when life was centered around the simple things, just being happy surrounded by nature and family. I always find comfort in returning to the things that make me happiest and most relaxed. I'm also lucky enough to be married to my business partner, who is just as obsessed with travel as I am. We're always eager to get outside and take a road trip whenever we can to unwind and recharge.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

Outdoorsy's mission is to make memorable outdoor experiences accessible to all. We believe everyone should have access to enjoy the benefits of time spent outside. Since day one, our team has been advocating to bring our platform to communities of people that are less inclined to get outdoors or experience the joys of a road trip. I'm proud to say we do that by providing a trusted marketplace that offers rental options at every price point — from \$58/night teardrop trailers to luxury sprinter vans at \$200/night — making it as cost effective as possible for anyone to get out and go!

Though we come from different walks of life, we can all benefit from the healing powers of the outdoors. Connecting our fellow humans to improved mental and physical health is something all our employees are passionate about because that's the type of work environment we've built at Outdoorsy. In today's world we try to promote the benefits of the outdoors to disconnect from technology and reconnect with the people and experiences you love, enjoy peace of mind, and improve your mental health.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year ahead?

This question is great timing, as I've just dedicated time to think about what goals I wanted to achieve in 2022. These are the areas:

- Continue to develop being a better leader so I can create opportunities for other people in the company to achieve their goals.
- Self-development and personal growth. Growth never ends, so maintaining the courage to look at the areas I can do better.
- Create time for recreation travel and more time with the community we serve. My goal is to have the courage to spend less time tied to my laptop. Find more time for self and recharge because that's what we believe in at Outdoorsy: time outdoors and road trips!



BRIGIT ZIMMERMAN

CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER, PRICELINE.COM

What steps did you take to develop yourself as a leader?

My leadership style continues to evolve. We're living in a time in which business and travel are becoming more complicated and our teams are distributed across multiple locations, requiring continued changes to how I lead. At the core, however, there are three things that have been and continue to be important in my development. First, I'm working in an industry for which I have passion, and that passion makes me a more present leader. Second, I make time to invest in myself, both formally and informally. In the past, I've had a coach who surveyed a few of my colleagues about my leadership style and they shared constructive feedback. While some of it was painful to hear at first, it has been incredibly useful in helping me hone in on the areas where I need to do more work. Finally, I experiment. I try things that seem to work for other leaders that I admire. They don't always work for me or my team, but that learning helps me create a style that's unique to who I am as a leader.

What was a key obstacle you faced early in your career, and how did you overcome it?

Finding my voice. It's funny, as a kid I had no problems speaking my mind, but as I grew in my career I became more cautious. It took me a while to see myself as other people saw me, and understand and believe that people wanted to hear what I had to say. Confidence doesn't build overnight, so there were some tricks I used to get it back. I made it a point to speak in every meeting. I also practiced sharing opinions and making decisions without second guessing myself. And finally, I practiced being OK with imperfection — we can fail, as long as we fail fast and learn.

What do you think companies should do to retain and attract more women talent?

One thing I love about Priceline is the value we place on diversity. Having different backgrounds and voices represented, including female voices, makes us a stronger company. Not only does it improve our culture, but it also makes us a better

travel solution. Reflecting our diverse set of customers in our employee base makes us better equipped to understand our customers' needs and design products to satisfy those needs. We also foster community and growth by offering career development programs, including a specific program for our female employees, Women Impacting Priceline. One thing I love about this program is that some of the activities are open to people of all genders. It's so important for our male colleagues to understand and appreciate the perspective female employees bring to the equation.

Additionally, our corporate culture is one where we place tremendous value on diversity of thought. It's an environment where all employees, regardless of gender, have a seat at the table. That respect and opportunity for upward mobility, combined with career development programs and benefits that help employees balance their career and personal lives, are critical to both attracting and retaining top female talent.

How would you describe your leadership style?

In three words: transparent, approachable, collaborative. I believe that transparency creates accountability, and my team's success is my success. And I know that I'm often not the smartest person in the room. I've found that when I empower my team, we get great results, and they will call on me when they need support.

How do you recharge?

In non-pandemic times, I exercise and take vacations! During the pandemic, my fiancé and I, plus our dogs, moved in with my sister and her husband. I know that this is an odd arrangement, but being with family, and exercising, has encouraged me to step away from work and recharge almost every day. I think the key is to create some separation — be deliberate about taking time away from work and spending time doing what matters to you.

How do you advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in your workplace?

I'm fortunate to work in an organization where we not only talk about diversity, equity and inclusion, we also take action to improve DEI. We're creating diverse candidate slates for open roles, and we've built and continue to build programming to ensure people from all backgrounds feel included. Ultimately, though, we have to walk the walk. We collect data and feedback to make sure that the types of programs we implement are impactful. Our goal is to create an open dialogue to ensure we're continuously fostering diversity and inclusion as well as strengthening our employee community.

What goals (professional or personal) do you have for the year?

Professionally, I'm looking forward to getting back on a plane to see my customers and meet my new team members across the globe. We've gotten good at remote work, but I believe there's still immense value in being face-to-face with partners and teammates. Personally, I hope 2022 is the year my fiancé and I finally tie the knot! The global pandemic has pushed our destination wedding date back, but we're optimistic that we'll be able to bring everyone together for a celebration this year.



WHO WE ARE



Women Leading Travel & Hospitality is a membership-based association that connects executive women across all sectors of the travel and hospitality industry. Its mission is to unite, inspire and empower its community of executive women leaders by providing unparalleled resources, support and motivation to achieve personal and professional growth. For more information, visit womenleadingtravelandhospitality.com.



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