



**WOMEN  
LEADING**

TRAVEL &  
HOSPITALITY™

# TOP 50 *tips* OF 2024

INSIGHTS ON LEADERSHIP,  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND BUSINESS STRATEGY  
FROM AND FOR WOMEN  
TRAVEL & HOSPITALITY LEADERS

## editor's note

**B**eing a leader in today's rapidly evolving travel and hospitality ecosystem isn't for the faint of heart.

Challenges abound, such as attracting and retaining talent, motivating teams, determining what the future of the industry holds with ever-changing consumer behaviors and the adoption of new technology, and meeting the increasingly elevated needs of your customers. These are just a few of the important tasks you figure to work on each day.

Yet all of that takes a back seat to producing a healthy balance sheet, no matter public or private company. With this dynamic in mind, it's hard for leaders to go at it alone. Not only is it potentially damaging to your personal health and wellness, but it's not in the best interest of the employees and companies that you're charged with leading. This is why Women Leading Travel & Hospitality has produced its first annual Top 50 Tips report.

This comprehensive resource is a tool to make you a better leader, offering a collection of the 50 best tips of the year that appeared on the Women Leading Travel & Hospitality website. The tips — which come from travel and hospitality leaders, career coaches, industry analysts, among others — are grouped into six key content pillars: business strategy, career, diversity and inclusion, executive leadership, executive professional development, and mentorship.

The tips featured in this year's report are easily digestible by readers, having been organized in a clean, easy-to-read format that you can refer to for some quick inspiration. Furthermore, the tips are prescriptive in nature, designed for the reader to act upon. The goal is to help our audience produce tangible results by implementing these tips within their careers and respective businesses.

To produce this year's report, Women Leading Travel & Hospitality's editorial staff carefully reviewed every piece of content we published in 2024 to identify what we believe were the 50 very best tips of the year. These tips cover a multitude of topics, including general leadership, personal brand building, hiring, incorporating new technology into your business, mentorship, among others. The mix was intentional; a means to spotlight tips that could help our community to become more well-rounded and better leaders, both in their current and future roles.

Each tip offers valuable insight that you can implement immediately, leading to both improved company and personal performance. While not all 50 tips may be applicable to you and/or your company at the moment, there's certainly enough here for you to get inspired. In fact, we believe it would be wise to make it one of your New Year's resolutions to begin incorporating some of these tips into both your personal and professional lives.

We hope you enjoy these 50 tips! If you have any questions or comments about them or would like to provide content to Women Leading Travel & Hospitality in 2025, please drop me a line at [hdemaio@napco.com](mailto:hdemaio@napco.com).



**Hannah DeMaio**

*Vice President*

**Women Leading Travel & Hospitality**



# business strategy

I believe the future of the industry will show a notable shift towards experiential travel, catering to the preferences of modern travelers seeking unique and authentic experiences.

– [Melissa DelBuono, Travel Funders Network, “Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Member Spotlight,” Feb. 15](#)

As a destination marketing organization, we’re being very thoughtful around how we enter that [AI] space. Research we’re seeing related to AI in trip planning is sort of slow. We’re trying to be very intentional about how we enter that space and make sure we’re doing all the research and all the understanding on the back end so when we do get there we’re entering at the right time and we’re doing it in a way that consumers are actually going to find it useful.

– [Leah Chandler, Discover Puerto Rico, “4 Industry Leaders Talk Tech, Process Improvements,” July 17](#)

Having the ability to pivot and adapt to changing landscapes is crucial. Hoteliers and travel brands should be using data to stay ahead of the curve, including understanding client preferences and industry trends. Analyzing booking patterns, feedback and market trends can help make informed decisions and tailor offerings to meet evolving needs and improve the overall client experience.

– [Bonnie Helena, AIC Hotel Group, “An Experience to Remember: Experiential Marketing’s Growing Role in Cultivating Loyal Travel Customers,” Sept. 25](#)



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Compliance with local regulations enables everyone to have a voice in addressing overtourism-related issues that face a community. And while an even-handed approach to regulation is a straightforward way to make a difference without affecting the local tourism-related economy, one thing is certain: communities are best served when all stakeholders work together to solve problems.

– [Pam Knudsen, Avalara MyLodgeTax, “How Common Sense Regulations Can End ‘Overtourism’ and Protect Our Dream Destinations,” Oct. 25](#)



# business strategy



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Sustainability is of critical importance to travel, tourism and hospitality. Engage your teams by including them in efforts locally or globally, targeted at respecting and prioritizing the wellbeing of destinations where they, and others, work. This can serve to energize and connect them to your goals as an organization and to those of the industry.

– Helen Horsham-Bertels, *Bago Consulting*, “[Employee Centricity as a Leadership Priority](#),” Nov. 18

There are so many more [environmental] regulations coming out, and whether or not we are committed to ESG from a regulatory perspective or even from an individual perspective, it’s the right thing to do. I’m looking at what various cruise lines are doing to stay committed to reducing those scope 1, scope 2, scope 3 emissions.

– Jinita Thakkar, *formerly Norwegian Cruise Line*, “[Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Member Spotlight](#),” Dec. 2

Active listening is the cornerstone of successful interactions. Make a conscious effort to listen attentively to customers and colleagues, seeking to understand their needs, concerns and emotions. Demonstrating empathy and genuine interest can establish rapport and foster trust, leading to more positive outcomes in sales and customer service interactions.

– Andres Lares, *Shapiro Negotiations Institute*, “[5 Tips to Increase and Display Your Emotional Intelligence](#),” March 21

Technology and data are not driving the business; the experience is driving the technology and data we’re picking to make sure that it corresponds. For us data is more of a vehicle to free up our team members to be able to smile, to be able to do the things that AI and technology can’t do.

– Claudia Infante, *Margaritaville*, “[4 Industry Leaders Talk Tech, Process Improvements](#),” July 17

# career

The first step in successfully negotiating a raise starts with increasing your visibility at work. Check your attitude: Are you a team player? Are you doing your job well consistently and conscientiously? For most women (and hopefully this won't be the case in another 40 years) it feels incredibly awkward to self-promote. Because women don't feel comfortable talking about themselves, they miss the opportunity to share with their bosses (beyond an annual performance review) what they contribute to the bottom line. Sometimes their contributions go unnoticed or, worse yet, their accomplishments are attributed to others.

– *Jenny Mitchell, Chavender, “[3 Tips for Negotiating Your Next Raise](#),” July 15*

To ignite more impact, it's crucial to start with a clear vision of what you want to achieve. And at the heart of any achievable goal must be passion. Define what that is for you. Ask yourself: What is the problem I must solve above all others? Is it rooted in social change, environmental issues, or personal growth? Or perhaps it focuses on business ethics? Is it about human rights issues? There are several paths you can follow. As you start down the road of discovery, you may find times when these individual items intersect. If that happens, you can potentially blend them together as long as you're passionate about the issues.

– *Courtney Lohmann, Courtney Lohmann Consulting, “[Creating an Impact: The 3 Ps of Impact Strategy](#),” Aug. 19*

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Be willing to take the chance or to move whenever people aren't ... If that's what's important to you, then go for it. When you start a new job — whether it's internally or externally — you have the opportunity to completely rebrand yourself.

– *Cheryl Reynolds, Hertz, “[Passion and Pivots: How These Travel Leaders Built Their Careers](#),” Aug. 29*

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# career

Follow your heart when making decisions for your career. Career moves you make are all about learning and adapting to new environments and gaining experience to further yourself.

– Lauren Moss, Andaz West Hollywood, [“Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Member Spotlight,” Aug. 29](#)



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Say ‘yes.’ And after you say ‘yes,’ you don’t know how it’s going to go. Is it going to go well or not so well? That’s the adventure. There are highs and lows. And then once you have the adventure, you’re going to get to the other side. That’s where you’re going to grow. And then rinse and repeat.

– Carla Hall, chef, TV host, author and motivational speaker, [“Carla Hall on Being Present and Authentic in Life and at Work,” Nov. 25](#)

Creating impact is understanding your ignition, your why, your trash elephant. You cannot create the change you want to see and therefore impact the world around you until you know what it is that you must do. Your key to success is identifying your trash elephant and shining a spotlight on it. It’s not something to be afraid of; it’s something to honor. It will lead you down the right fork in the road and set your path for impact.

– Courtney Lohmann, Courtney Lohmann Consulting, [“Creating Impact: Embracing Your Trash Elephant,” Oct. 21](#)



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# diversity and inclusion

The greater the diversity in backgrounds, the stronger the team becomes. Respecting your teammates and being open to everyone's ideas and feedback is essential. There's no such thing as a bad question, only the one that's not asked. Ultimately, teams work well if they have the same set of goals and values.

– Gilda Perez-Alvarado, *Orient Express and Accor Group*, “[Insights From the C-Suite](#),” Oct. 25

Women often participate in and lead DEI initiatives within their organization while men may not feel welcome to participate in these discussions. Men may even feel as though they're part of the problem. Such concerns may lead to a feedback loop that results in even fewer men participating. Yet the participation of men in these DEI discussions is critical for their success. Organizations need to indicate to men that they play an essential role in creating inclusion in the workplace and encourage men's participation in DEI activities. Additionally, providing men with opportunities to discuss gender issues in majority-men groups may reduce men's concerns about making mistakes or being judged as sexist.

– Catalyst, “[Engaging Men: Barriers and Gender Norms](#),” Jan. 22

Diversity in our senior leadership is essential to our business as we aim to be a great place to work. Diversity of perspective in background is vital to running a business as complex as an airline. In our boardroom we must have operators, communicators, finance, strategy, commercial and other disciplinary expertise to ensure we bring all stakeholders along and think through the ripple effect and implication of business decisions made every day.

– Linda Rutherford, *Southwest Airlines*, “[Insight From the C-Suite](#),” April 15

Bias erodes the link between what employees do and the ratings they receive. If companies don't take active steps to strengthen this connection, such as standardizing how employees are rated, they're opening the door to inequity.

– Dr. Allison Wynn, *Stanford VMware Women's Leadership Innovation Lab*, “[Women in the Workplace 2024](#),” Sept. 23



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# executive leadership

The secret to making people WANT to achieve a goal is all about connecting the head and the heart. The more we get our people to engage — to see the goal, feel it, believe it, want it so badly they can taste that moment of achievement — the more likely it is we'll get to the finish line in record time.

– *Cindy Solomon, Courageous Leadership Institute, “3 Ways to Set Your Team Up for Success in the New Year,” Jan. 8*



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There is a balance between showing up with empathy for the whole person and knowing that [a manager's] primary goal is to keep the team functioning and effective.

– *Sarah Savella, Savella Group, “Managing Employees With Anxiety: Using Radical Candor to Overcome Difficult Conversations in the Workplace,” Jan. 12*

By taking proper pauses in our work and prioritizing ourselves as full humans, we find the balance we need to be able to find joy outside of work, whether it's digging into hobbies or taking time for travel. Don't forget to nurture yourself! When we honor the need for rest, prioritize our own well-being, and invest in nonwork activities, we also help establish a culture that promotes healthy striving for our teams. Collectively, this builds a resilient, innovative and motivated team.

– *Carrie Skowronski, Leadology, “How to Be a Great Leader in 2024,” Feb. 1*



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I strive to foster a culture that embraces creativity and risk by recognizing and rewarding innovative ideas that are rooted in consumer insights, providing resources for experimentation, and creating a space where team members feel empowered to share and implement their creative solutions.

– *Laura Hodges Bethge, Celebrity Cruises, “How Leaders Across Travel and Hospitality Encourage Innovation and Take Calculated Risks,” Feb. 15*



# executive leadership



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The ingredients for a perfect recipe in hospitality are endless. But what cannot be missing is a huge dose of passion and love for your “home” and being ready to be versatile and embrace a different role every day. This is how I keep my team motivated.

– *Valentina De Santis, Grand Hotel Tremezzo, “2024 Top Women in Travel & Hospitality Report,” Feb. 12*

For my team, I try to notice if someone is working too many hours. We discuss how to prioritize or how I can step in and help. Also, it’s so important for folks to manage their own work schedule and make sure it fits with their personal life. Flexibility is critical to having work-life harmony.

– *Sangita Woerner, Alaska Airlines, “2024 Top Women in Travel & Hospitality Report,” Feb. 12*

When you don’t know what your employees are thinking, you have to assume that they’re seeing greener pastures in all of those job postings, when answering calls from search firms, and when talking to others in networking sessions. Without proactively discussing career goals and having regular check-ins with employees, you’re leaving your employee to create their own narrative about greener pastures.

– *Eileen Springer and Christine Alvarez, Your Next Next, “What Your Employees Are Really Thinking,” March 21*

I want you to make sure that your executive team knows — that everyone knows — how critical it is to measure happiness monthly. Do a quick pulse survey. Collect data in one-on-ones, in team meetings. You want to know where in the organization there are problems so that you can be proactive.”

– *Tia Graham, Arrive at Happy, “5 Tools to Create Happy, High-Performing Teams,” April 25*

# executive leadership

People, organizations and initiatives get stuck every day. The most amazing opportunities are hampered by the fears, judgments, assumptions and incorrect beliefs that construct division and limit progress. Breaking old patterns, becoming curious, and consciously activating the best strategies will empower you and your people to generate momentum and achieve better outcomes.

– Heather Hansen O'Neill, *From Fear to Fire*, *"The Elements of Adventure: Empowering Leaders, Igniting Results, Changing the World,"* May 24



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People respond to change in so many ways based on many factors, including their own past experiences with similar changes. While sometimes 100 percent transparency isn't possible, I've learned you simply cannot overcommunicate on the things you can share. Share early and often, while remembering that you and your executive team have probably had a lot more time to digest the change than everyone else. Therefore, plan for the time to bring your people along — win hearts and minds — and always be people focused.

– Julie Arrowsmith, *G6 Hospitality*, *"Insights From the C-Suite,"* Nov. 4

As a leader, setting clear expectations is key. I really value fairness, even when it might mean I get less. When everyone understands what's expected, we can all own our part and rely on each other to get things done.

– Jennifer York, *MGM Resorts International*, *"Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Member Spotlight,"* Nov. 4



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# executive leadership

Leadership, to me, means more than simply managing others — it's about showing initiative, taking responsibility, and inspiring those around you. I want to see candidates who can set a positive example and approach challenges with confidence and creativity. Equally important is their ability to overcome obstacles. I look for someone who has demonstrated resilience, someone who can adapt and keep pushing forward, even when things don't go as planned. These qualities are essential for success and growth in any role.

— *Leyla Osorio, Global Cruises LLC, “Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Member Spotlight,” Dec. 2*



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Ninety-five percent of the issues you face as a leader at work — conflict, low morale, turnover, etc. — are caused by two things: a lack of communication and a lack of relationships. Think about what could actually happen if we fixed the poor communication and the lack of relationships. Imagine a team that's actually performing at all levels and doing what we want them to do.

— *Courtney Ramsey, Leadership Development Consultant, “3 Tips to Help Leaders Improve Communication and Strengthen Relationships,” Dec. 2*



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The best way to motivate team members is by recognizing their individual strengths and contributions and supporting those talents by letting them shine, while also creating opportunities for them to grow and flourish. I also believe in celebrating successes, both big and small.

— *Linda Beltran, Holiday Inn Club Vacations, “Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Member Spotlight,” Aug. 19*

# executive leadership



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Go seek out failure. Swing for the fences. Imagine if your team had the freedom to do that knowing all those fears of not being valued weren't going to necessarily come true if you as a shape-shifting leader were recognizing the audacity they had to take bold, sometimes surprising risks.

– Anne Marie Anderson, Speaker, Author and Broadcaster [\*“Shut Down Your Inner Critic With This One Trick,”\*](#) Oct. 25

Be bold and take risks. Don't wait for someone to give you permission to take on big projects or to step into leadership roles. Believe in your ability to contribute and don't shy away from opportunities to challenge yourself. It's in those moments of uncertainty where you grow the most. Surround yourself with people who support and inspire you, and don't be afraid to carve your own path.

– Armonie Boucharens, Marriott Vacations Worldwide, [\*“Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Member Spotlight,”\*](#) Nov. 18

The thing that I look for [in a candidate] — and it doesn't matter what title, what management level — is attitude. You cannot train a disposition. You cannot train an attitude.

– Amanda Voss, Bellagio and Park MGM, [\*“Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Member Spotlight,”\*](#) Jan. 12



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# executive professional development

Often employees seek growth in title. Although this is important, seeking growth through new experiences and advancing our skills is of greater importance. When we advance our skills and push outside of our comfort zone, title advancement will eventually come.

— Amanda Joiner, *The Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center*, [“2024 Top Women in Travel & Hospitality Report,”](#) Feb. 12



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Boundaries are very important in terms of creating downtime for yourself. Be present when with your family, learn to say no and delegate when possible. I’m also aware that this is a constant balancing act. The perfect balance is hard, if not impossible to obtain. You just have to be accepting of yourself as much as possible. I try to be a role model to my team in terms of work-life balance. I also tell them it’s OK to be off-balance at times, and when they are to be accepting of the same. In addition, I plan activities with our team, such as hiking, and I enjoy volunteer work. This allows time away from work, positively impacts our communities, and further emphasizes work-life balance.”

— Jyoti Sarolia, *Ellis Hospitality Group*, [“Women in Travel and Hospitality Share Strategies to Maintain Work-Life Harmony,”](#) March 4

Everyone can and should have a coach when you’re ready for one. You have to be a self-reflective person and you have to be ready, willing and able to actually take in the feedback and move and change with it.

— Quendrida Whitmore, *Quendrida Whitmore Coaching & Consulting*, [“Here’s What Career Coaches Wish Everyone Knew,”](#) April 22



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# executive professional development



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Know what you can and cannot control.  
My journey of giving myself permission and grace started by identifying and getting really uncomfortable about recognizing that there are certain things I can't control.

– [Pelwasha Faquiryan, Chargebacks911, “The Power of Perspective: Permission and Grace to Be Yourself, For Yourself,” May 6](#)

In today's dynamic job market, continuous learning is essential for career growth and adaptability. AI-based learning platforms can personalize educational content and training programs based on an individual's existing knowledge, learning style, and career goals. Through adaptive learning algorithms, these platforms can identify skill gaps, recommend relevant courses or resources, and provide tailored feedback and support, enabling efficient upskilling and reskilling for new roles or industries.

– [Angel Vossough, BetterAI, “Leveraging AI for Smoother Career Transitions and Growth,” May 7](#)

While gaining diverse experiences is valuable, reaching the highest levels of professional success requires working within an environment that fosters alignment and allows your potential to flourish without artificial constraints.

– [Dawn Gallagher, Crescent Hotels & Resorts, “Insights From the C-Suite,” May 24](#)



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# executive professional development

Lean in and say yes to opportunities that will stretch you. It's amazing how much you can grow by taking advantage of career opportunities that make you a bit uncomfortable.

– Jennifer McCardell, Hilton, [“Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Member Spotlight,”](#) June 24

Being your authentic self in the context of your personal and psychological being is really just closing the gap between what you feel, what you believe, and what you show the world. If you want to accelerate where you want to go, you need to smash that gap between who you are, what you believe, what you stand for, and what you show the world.

– Odessa “OJ” Jenkins, Bonfire Women, [“8 Things Leadership Expert Odessa ‘OJ’ Jenkins Says You Need to Lead Authentically,”](#) Nov. 11



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Be proactive in sharing your ideas and insights during meetings and discussions. Your contributions are valuable and can truly impact the team's success. Diverse perspectives are needed for innovation and problem-solving, and your voice is an essential part of that process.

– Korie Bukovelo, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, [“Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Member Spotlight,”](#) Aug. 5

The way that I've learned is by asking questions. What I've realized time and time again is that if I start asking questions, other people start connecting the dots and then they start asking questions, and it leads to not only phenomenal conversation but epic PowerPoints, epic presentations and overall great team collaboration.

– Keryn McNamara, Aimbridge Hospitality, [“What's Your Leadership Superpower? 4 Executives Share Their Keys to Success,”](#) Aug. 5



# mentorship

Get a mentor. Ask questions. Be who you are, not who you think others want you to be. Be authentic and, most of all, show yourself grace.

– Annie Holcombe, formerly of Homes & Villas by Marriott Bonvoy, [“Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Member Spotlight,” Jan. 8](#)

Mentorship and sponsorship weren't a thing when I came of age, although I've had supporters and cheerleaders for me and the things I wanted to accomplish. Now as a senior leader, I believe it's my responsibility to foster younger women and encourage them to have confidence in their abilities. My door is open to anyone on my team who wants to talk about their career, work/life balance, new ideas and directions, or has constructive criticism for the work we do. I do, however, single out those with exceptional talent to groom them into the leaders they should and can be.

– Stacy Ritter, Visit Lauderdale, [“2024 Top Women in Travel & Hospitality Report,” Feb. 12](#)

Whether your objective is to advance your career, make a course correction, lead a major project, transform an organization, or make any type of bold, fearless move, having a diverse and influential circle of mentors makes the journey much, much easier.

– Jo Miller, Be Leaderly, [“40 Questions to Ask a Mentor,” April 1](#)

I'm a firm believer in “paying it forward.” It's why I prioritize cultivating relationships with talent inside and outside Wyndham. As a leader, there's no greater gift I can give to another person than to spend time with them and help shape their career path or achieve their personal goals. I believe that because it's something I've experienced myself. Many of the principles I hold onto as a leader today came from mentors who have invested their time in me. It requires honesty and transparency, mutual dedication and flexibility — even if that means changing the relationship as development progresses.

– Monica Melancon, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, [“Insight From the C-Suite,” May 7](#)

It's not uncommon to run into challenges with mentoring, especially if you've never managed a mentoring program before. For a mentoring relationship to be a success, it will require effort from both parties, but a more concerted effort should come from the mentee. If your mentee is lacking motivation or commitment, take time to schedule an open conversation. Understanding the underlying cause of the lack of motivation is key to turning the situation around before the relationship goes down a path that is ultimately unproductive. When it comes to providing direction, finding the proper balance can be delicate for mentors. Providing too much can overwhelm their mentee, while providing too little can leave the mentee to flounder and second guess themselves which will interfere with their progress. Check in regularly to ask your mentee if you're providing the right amount of direction based on their goals and timetable.

– Christena Garduno, Media Culture, [“How Female Leaders Can Leverage the Power of Mentorship Programs,” May 20](#)



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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](https://womenleadingtravelandhospitality.com).