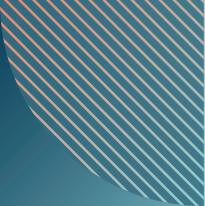
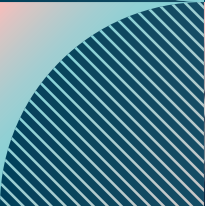
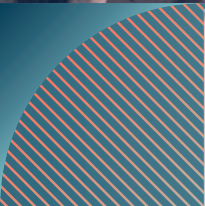


2025
*top
women*
in TRAVEL & HOSPITALITY



Elevating women for lasting change

As a global leader in travel insurance and assistance, Allianz Partners is proud to be an active supporter and sponsor of Women Leading Travel and Hospitality.

Together, we're helping professional women across the travel industry achieve their goals—setting a course for the next generation of leaders.

- Edge Workplace Gender Equality certified
- 9th Global FTSE Diversity and Inclusion Index
- Women's Empowerment Principles signatory

→ **Learn more about us and our services at AllianzPartners.com**





We are thrilled to present the 2025 edition of the **Top Women in Travel & Hospitality report**, our fifth annual celebration of the extraordinary women shaping the future of this industry. Over the years, this report has highlighted the achievements of trailblazing women who have led with resilience, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. This year's honorees are no exception — they are redefining leadership and driving meaningful change across multiple sectors of the travel and hospitality industry, including airlines, hotels, cruise lines, tourism boards, car rentals, shared economies, and beyond.

In addition to our annual celebration of executive women, we're also revealing our first annual list of Women on the Rise, the next generation of influential leaders in travel and hospitality. These emerging leaders — nominated by Women Leading Travel & Hospitality members, partners and industry insiders — are managers and directors driving success in operations, events, partnerships, marketing, technology, and more.

As we reflect on the progress made in advancing women's leadership, we recognize that the work is far from over. Building a truly inclusive, diverse and equitable industry requires continued commitment and action. Many of these leaders have battled imposter syndrome and faced incredible challenges based on their gender, race, backgrounds, and more. Their stories inspire us to embrace our expertise, own our futures, and step boldly into leadership roles with confidence and purpose.

This year's honorees are not only driving business growth but are also at the forefront of key industry trends. From harnessing artificial intelligence to enhance customer experiences and streamline operations to embracing hyperpersonalization that caters to ever-evolving traveler expectations, these women are leading the charge in innovation. Additionally, sustainability remains a top priority as companies commit to more responsible tourism practices that benefit both people and the planet.

We are immensely grateful to Allianz Partners for their continued support of this report and our community.

"I look forward every year to reading the personal stories and insights from the remarkable women highlighted in this report," says Emily Hartman, chief, business teams, USA, Allianz Partners. "Their journeys serve as a positive and powerful influence on the future of the travel and hospitality industry and it's a privilege for Allianz Partners to support and celebrate these women."

We hope this report serves as a source of inspiration, encouragement and practical guidance for women at all stages of their careers. Whether you're an emerging leader or a seasoned executive, may the insights and stories shared within this report empower you to take the next bold step in your journey.

Here's to another year of progress, innovation, and women leading the way in travel and hospitality!

Marie

Marie Albiges
Managing Editor
Women Leading Travel & Hospitality

***Find more Top Women
in Travel & Hospitality
content here!***





Sejal Amin
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, PRICELINE

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

My leadership philosophy centers around fostering a collaborative environment built on open communication, where everyone feels empowered to share their ideas and expertise. Leadership comes from everywhere. As leaders, it is the very core of our jobs to ensure that leadership happens at all levels. Therefore, I work to create an atmosphere where people understand the value of their contributions.

I strive to lead by example, showing my commitment to development and transparency. I'm a huge proponent of the power of active listening, setting clear expectations, providing constructive feedback, and celebrating successes together. I also prioritize continuous learning and growth for the team to achieve our shared goals.

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

I strongly believe that happy and informed humans bring their best selves to work every day, which is why I have a people-first approach. At the heart of this is information. Context is everything — it's our job to create context for each other, which then has the impact of making people feel as though they belong. There are three important practices that create those conditions:

- Create a healthy flow of information to all levels of the organization to improve the quality of decisions and build trust.
- Listen to all levels of the organization to better understand the work environment, then use that information to continually make improvements.
- Provide feedback and teach others to do the same because it's the core of building trust and respect in any working environment.

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

Conversational and agentic AI are poised to significantly shape the future of the travel industry. While technological advancements are happening rapidly, there's still some way to go before these tools reach a level of maturity and widespread consumer adoption to impact different types of travelers in the most useful ways.

We're seeing early strides with personalized recommendations through chatbots, like Priceline's Penny, and new agentic integrations with tools such as OpenAI's Operator. Early adopters are benefitting from customized planning advice, real-time updates while traveling, and "always on" customer service.

The current technology is exciting and becoming increasingly more context-sensitive and relevant every day. I'm excited to see the ongoing development as the industry continues to simplify trip planning and enhance the overall travel experience through AI.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

To identify future leaders, I look for individuals who consistently exhibit key leadership traits such as initiative, communication skills, teamwork, adaptability, and learning agility. This evaluation should occur at all organizational levels where a succession plan for a managerial role is relevant. Once potential leaders are identified, we take a strategic approach to their development by creating a personalized development plan in collaboration with each individual. This plan includes mentoring, 360-degree feedback, professional development, and stretch assignments that challenge them and promote growth. Stretch assignments are especially critical. While these opportunities may be uncomfortable at times, they enable people to learn and grow from new experiences that they otherwise might not have had. Continuous investment in this process by both the individual and the organization is essential for achieving successful outcomes.

There are so few female chief technology officers at U.S. companies — what challenges have you faced as a woman in a male-dominated field like technology, especially as you rose to the C-suite?

Women in technology still face a range of challenges despite progress being made in the industry. Some of the challenges include gender bias, lack of representation, and a lack of access to leadership opportunities. Unfortunately, due to the gender bias in the tech industry, one of the challenges I faced years ago was the lack of sponsors which could have had an accelerating impact on my growth. This put me at a disadvantage in terms of career growth and advancement because I missed out on being considered for new opportunities and professional development. Recognizing that I had to chart my own course, I had to put a huge amount of effort into building that sponsor network, raising my hand for opportunities, finding my way into the right conversations, and continuing to manage those relationships as I navigated my career. I would highly recommend dedicating the time and effort into maintaining both a sponsor and mentor network because it could make a significant difference to your growth.



ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

Judith Apshago

CHIEF DIGITAL OFFICER, AMTRAK

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

My leadership philosophy centers on transparency, collaboration, empowerment and continuous growth. I lead by example, fostering open communication, encouraging collaboration, and demonstrating a natural curiosity to learn and grow. I set high standards, reward strong performance, and view mistakes as valuable learning opportunities. I believe a leader's role is to inspire others to reach their full potential, providing guidance and support while challenging them to stretch their limits.

With my team, I focus on providing clear goals and expectations, offering the right tools and coaching, removing roadblocks, empowering them to succeed, and then stepping back to support their progress. Transparency is essential to me — I am honest about challenges and successes, which builds trust and mutual respect, the foundation for any successful team. At the heart of my approach is a results-driven business mindset, understanding that achieving goals requires the active engagement, collaboration and growth of the people who contribute to them. This balance between achieving results and nurturing people allows both individuals and the business to thrive together.

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

I strongly believe in the value of multiple viewpoints and work to foster an open and supportive environment where every voice is heard and feedback is encouraged.

I actively seek input from all team members, fostering teamwork, collaboration and shared accountability to strengthen trust and relationships within the technology team and with our business partners.

Recognition and appreciation are also key to my approach. Acknowledging the efforts and achievements of team members — whether through public praise, personal notes or awards — helps build a sense of belonging and motivates individuals. Professional development is another vital aspect of empowering my team. By offering mentoring and learning opportunities, I enable team members to take ownership of their growth and bring their best selves to work.

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

The future of the rail industry, and transportation as a whole, are being shaped by a range of innovations, technologies and trends. Artificial intelligence and machine learning are already enabling rail companies to detect anomalies and predict when equipment or infrastructure might fail, allowing for more timely maintenance, reducing downtime, and enhancing passenger safety. AI and data analytics are also transforming the passenger experience by offering greater personalization, both during the ticketing process and while in transit.

Other advancements include seamless integration between modes of transportation, facilitating a smoother end-to-end travel experience, and game-changing innovations such as hydrogen-powered fleets, autonomous trains, expanded high-speed rail, and smart signaling systems poised to revolutionize the industry in the near future.



“I strongly believe in the value of multiple viewpoints and work to foster an open and supportive environment where every voice is heard and feedback is encouraged.”

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

Succession planning and developing future leaders are key priorities within our organization. We focus on identifying and nurturing high potential employees to create a strong pipeline of leaders prepared to step into key roles. Our internal leadership development program is complemented by mentoring and hands-on experience. We encourage a growth mindset and provide continuous feedback through regular career development conversations, ensuring we understand each individual's strengths and areas for growth.

Each Digital Technology employee is allotted 40 hours per year for professional development, with the encouragement to pursue relevant certifications, attend industry conferences, and participate in other learning activities to enhance their knowledge and skills while staying current on industry trends and innovations.

Amtrak has been modernizing its operations to improve the customer experience. Can you share some of the most impactful digital transformation initiatives you've led and how they've enhanced the passenger journey?

My team partners with business leaders to enable and deliver an enterprise-wide digital transformation. We've implemented numerous initiatives to strengthen safety, enhance service delivery, improve employee productivity, and elevate the passenger experience. Some recent impactful projects aimed at reducing service disruptions and improving safety include:

- Implementing sensors to capture real-time data, paired with AI, to predict failures and enable proactive maintenance, minimizing service disruptions and downtime.
- Replacing legacy systems and enhancing train dispatch and control to improve safety, reliability and efficiency.
- Launching a Safety Reporting System to streamline and enhance safety reporting for both passengers and employees.
- Deploying approximately 200 solar-powered, digitally enabled security gates along the Northeast Corridor tracks to enhance safety and security in preparation for the NextGen Acela high-speed trains.
- Equipping over 13,000 frontline workers with mobile devices, providing them with the tools to enable safer and more efficient operations.





Dina Belon

PRESIDENT, STAYPINEAPPLE HOTELS

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

Leadership begins with understanding your own strengths. Too often, people try to fit themselves into a mold of what they think a leader should be, but that's not authentic. Embrace who you are and what you're good at. I use my top five strengths — futuristic, strategic, relator, responsibility, and activator — to guide my leadership. I communicate the vision (futuristic), keep things clear and realistic (strategic), trust and empower my team (relator), hold them accountable (responsibility), and drive progress (activator). That's my focus every day!

“Leadership begins with understanding your own strengths. Too often, people try to fit themselves into a mold of what they think a leader should be, but that’s not authentic.”

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

It's simple, really: you just do it! At Staypineapple, trusting and empowering our hoteliers is EVERYTHING; it's our secret sauce. We hire people who genuinely want to help others and love making people happy. During interviews, we look for emotional intelligence and then trust our team to do their thing and get out of their way!

Forget rigid training; we show them what excellence looks like and encourage them to connect with guests as themselves. Our hotel staff are the hoteliers, not the vice presidents. Our “surprise and delight” culture pillar is all about empowerment. Every team member has the freedom to do something special for a guest whenever they want. It's about making both our team and guests happy — and who doesn't love spreading joy?

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

Hyperpersonalization is definitely shaping a lot of the technological changes we're seeing. We're focused on enhancing personalized guest experiences by using both historical and real-time data to understand guest preferences and passions. Our company has always prioritized building relationships with guests, providing “relationship service” that goes beyond basic customer service to understand what makes guests tick.

In 2024, we replaced the majority of our technology stack, which we're now leveraging to share relevant information





across our portfolio of hotels. This enables personalized recommendations and connections between team members and guests who share similar interests. It not only enhances the guest experience but also fosters a fun, engaging workplace culture centered around surprising and delighting our guests.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

We value emotional intelligence and individual strengths over just technical skills or past experience. Take our chief growth officer, Michael Hirschler. He started in People and Culture but has an innate ability to cut through the clutter, identify what truly matters, and come up with innovative solutions. He's a Cornell Hospitality Management grad (which he'd definitely want me to mention!) and has proven himself to have much more to offer. His emotional intelligence enables him to get our creative and tech teams working together seamlessly. Mike is a perfect example of how we identify strengths and create opportunities for growth at all levels of the organization.

We also ask our team members about their goals and dreams during performance reviews. This helps us understand how we can support them, whether that's with us or elsewhere. As a smaller company, we know that sometimes the next step for someone may be outside Staypineapple, but we're always excited to welcome back "boomerang" employees who have gained valuable experience elsewhere.

Staypineapple plans to use 90 percent renewable energy by 2026. Can you share the steps you're taking to achieve this ambitious goal and any innovations you're exploring in renewable energy sourcing?

I'm incredibly proud of our accomplishments and leadership in sustainability. Right now, seven out of 10 of our hotels operate with renewable energy. We've achieved



this through a mix of being in cities with significant renewable energy in their grids, purchasing renewable energy credits, and investing in community solar projects. Our buildings range from new constructions in New York City to a historic landmark in Chicago, so their energy needs vary greatly. We continue to work to improve efficiency, and we're committed to purchasing renewable energy so our guests can rest easy knowing we're reducing their carbon footprint.



Katty Byrd

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF GUEST SERVICES,
NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

I consider myself a transformational leader who encourages, inspires and motivates team members to create meaningful and impactful changes, both personally and professionally. I foster a culture of innovation, collaboration and transparency. Nothing is more rewarding than having an impact on those I work alongside to help them achieve their goals. If I can look back and see that an interaction, a goal-setting session, or a heart-to-heart conversation played a role in strengthening someone's career foundation, then my job is done.

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

Frequent and recent touchpoints with team members, through both one-on-one and group meetings, are key to motivating, training and developing them. Building rapport is essential, not just with our guests but also with our team. Fostering a transparent, collaborative environment grounded in innovation is vital. As an organization, we continue to lead the cruise industry with innovation

by leveraging our diverse workforce, both shoreside and shipside. Their wealth of knowledge, passion and authenticity are central to our success. I strongly believe that information is power. Ensuring all pertinent information is readily available empowers team members to make swift, educated decisions.

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

AI is, and will continue to be, key to our ability to cater to guests' needs and evolve with them. The ability to tailor not only the onboard experience but every interaction with each unique guest — before, during, and after their cruise — by applying all available guest data is invaluable. AI will also allow our team to dedicate quality time to those interactions that require a human touch, making meaningful connections and creating lasting memories.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

I believe identifying the right fit for each team member is key. At the same time, exposing team members to new scenarios outside their usual scope and giving them full autonomy to resolve challenges is critical in building a solid foundation for future leaders. Additionally, I've found that frequent talent rotation, which introduces discomfort and challenges in their responsibilities and skill sets, helps develop resilient leaders who remain quick on their feet while making data-driven decisions.

How has the approach to guest services evolved during your tenure, and what initiatives have had the most significant impact?

As an organization, we're committed to continuously improving guest satisfaction by enhancing the guest experience shoreside, onboard, and at ports of call. Over the last five years, we've leveraged guest feedback as a gauge for improvement, enabling us to consistently exceed guest expectations. The launch of our "One Call Resolution" initiative, along with our guest-first approach, while remaining fiscally responsible, has provided a sustainable balance for our guest services operations. Being flexible and evolving with our guests' needs has always been a core goal. Our "Follow the Sun" initiative, where we leverage our global team to be available 24/7, has been well received by both guests and partners. Above all, my priority — and that of my team

— is always people: our guests, team members and partners. Underpinned by the three pillars of people, product and passion, closely aligning with Norwegian Cruise Line's "Guest First" philosophy places the guest at the heart of every decision. When the guest is at the center, everyone wins.

"Above all, my priority — and that of my team — is always people: our guests, team members and partners. Underpinned by the three pillars of people, product and passion, closely aligning with Norwegian Cruise Line's 'Guest First' philosophy places the guest at the heart of every decision."



Sarah Best Chensky

VICE PRESIDENT OF LUXURY AND LEISURE SALES,
MGM RESORTS INTERNATIONAL

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

My philosophy centers on the belief that teams are our most valuable asset. By actively listening, demonstrating empathy, and fostering their development, we create a path for collective growth. I prioritize spending time with my team, removing obstacles, and creating an environment where they can excel.

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

Each team member brings a unique skill set, area of expertise and passion. Tapping into what allows them to thrive is key to them feeling valued and fulfilled. I start by

"I start by asking questions each week of what they loved and loathed in their work. I do this to understand what energizes them and what drains them. These insights help me to make adjustments to better align with their strengths and create a more supportive environment."

asking questions each week of what they loved and loathed in their work. I do this to understand what energizes them and what drains them. These insights help me to make adjustments to better align with their strengths and create a more supportive environment.

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

As clients increasingly prefer less phone communication yet still desire immediate, personal connections, we're evolving our approach. We aim to strike a healthy balance between automation and intentional



“Our focus is on maintaining strong relationships while enhancing communication through modern tools and platforms that enable faster, more efficient responses.”



face-to-face interactions. Our focus is on maintaining strong relationships while enhancing communication through modern tools and platforms that enable faster, more efficient responses. We recognize the need to provide and expedite resources for clients as part of their decision-making process, while also advocating for intentional, personalized experiences to truly connect with our brands.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

We have a strong track record for promoting from within. MGM Resorts offers many tools for exploration, growth and mentorship. By fostering opportunities for team members to explore different career paths and engage in cross-functional projects, we broaden their skill sets and prepare them for leadership roles. This approach builds well-rounded individuals and opens new doors for their professional growth.



Travelers — especially luxury travelers — are now seeking more personalized, authentic experiences. MGM Resorts is already known for its experiences, so how are you incorporating the personal element?

Luxury travelers seek exclusivity, and with our iconic properties and vast resources, we can deliver truly bespoke experiences. Whether through unique access to world-renowned venues or personalized services, we focus on making every guest feel like they're part of something special, creating memories that last a lifetime.





Frid Edmond

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT CENTERS,
MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

My leadership philosophy centers on purpose, empowerment and collaboration. A clear purpose keeps me motivated and focused on our vision. I embody this by fostering an environment where diverse ideas thrive, encouraging my team to take ownership of their roles and embrace risk. I believe in leading by example —

“I believe in leading by example — demonstrating strength through vulnerability, maintaining clear communication, and taking responsibility for our results, both challenges and victories.”

demonstrating strength through vulnerability, maintaining clear communication, and taking responsibility for our results, both challenges and victories. I also rely on a trusted group of diverse individuals for feedback and ideas, recognizing that effective leadership requires collaboration.

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

Creating an inclusive environment where every team member feels valued is a top priority for me. I actively seek input from the team and celebrate the diverse perspectives they bring to the table. As co-chair of our Young Professionals Associate Resource Group, I extend this commitment beyond my immediate team, ensuring that inclusivity permeates the entire organization. By fostering a culture of regular feedback and maintaining an open-door policy, I reinforce the notion that every voice matters and is essential to our collective success.



What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

I see AI and data analytics transforming our industry by enhancing personalized guest experiences and streamlining operations. Adopting digital tools for communication and feedback will foster a more agile, responsive business model, enabling us to anticipate and meet evolving customer needs with actionable insights. I'm excited about a future where we can leverage these tools to build more capacity for our people.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

My approach to succession planning involves mentorship and targeted development programs. I focus on identifying high-potential individuals and providing them with stretch opportunities and exposure, balancing skill-building with advocacy. Having benefited from this myself, I trust in its effectiveness. My goal is to pay it forward, particularly by helping women advance to leadership roles. I firmly believe there's room for many women at the top!

What's a process you implemented in the world of Marriott's customer service that you're proud of?

At our Customer Engagement Centers, I implemented a simple "enroll everyone" strategy in alignment with a company-wide initiative to boost enrollments in the Marriott Bonvoy program. This initiative is crucial because it allows us to provide memorable experiences for our customers; the more we know about them, the better we can anticipate their needs and personalize their stays. Our amazing associates globally are the frontline of customer service, and I aim to equip them with all the tools and resources to perform seamlessly. The "enroll everyone" strategy required training, technology support, change management, communication, and recognition planning. Our leaders developed and executed local plans, resulting in a tenfold increase in enrollments from the previous year. This initiative significantly boosted our guest satisfaction scores and reinforced our commitment to exceptional service.

"My approach to succession planning involves mentorship and targeted development programs. I focus on identifying high-potential individuals and providing them with stretch opportunities and exposure, balancing skill-building with advocacy."





ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

Robin McClain

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, DESTINATION DC

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

I believe leadership is simply being a positive professional example for others to follow. I try to embody this philosophy by being prepared, speaking thoughtfully, listening to others, supporting team members with empathy, and being consistent in all that I do so the team knows they can always depend on me.

“I believe leadership is simply being a positive professional example for others to follow.”

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

When I think something positive about a team member, I intentionally share it. Therefore, as team members stand out, I share in person or through email about their positive impact. I’m also proactive about discussing challenging situations because acknowledging and working through those circumstances are important growth opportunities. I openly encourage team members’ contributions through brainstorming and hold one-on-one office hours to ensure I’m connected to each team member.

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

I think the biggest opportunity is with AI and deciding how to incorporate it while balancing what’s now with what’s next. One of the major ways we connect with consumers currently is through digital ads that drive to washington.org. That method will become obsolete at some point soon. However, the website content we develop will still help inform future content delivery — whatever it looks like.





“When I think something positive about a team member, I intentionally share it.”

It's both exciting and strange to consider when the technology isn't fully accessible yet, but I know we will still be inspiring consumers to travel to Washington, D.C. through whatever platform is next.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

Years ago, my boss shared that I needed to decide what eggs to put in my basket. Meaning, be intentional about what team members should be developed as future leaders. I'm really proud to share that the four vertical leads on my team have been working with me for eight years to 14 years. They're absolutely the succession plan and fantastic leaders in their own right. I invest in their professional development on an individual basis, advocate for promotions, and spend weekly one-on-ones and biweekly leadership team meetings ensuring we're developing our strategy collaboratively.

How did your marketing team come up with the “There's Only One DC” campaign, and how has it been received?

During a December 2022 marketing retreat, we had a brainstorm about our brand and advertising campaign. I knew it was time to evolve, but the discussion led to some crucial insights. First, our current brand was no longer reflecting the current state of Washington, D.C. and its evolution as a world-class city. Second, we wanted to develop a brand and campaign that resonated not just with consumers, but also locals — from D.C. city leaders to businesses that invest in membership at Destination DC.

“There's Only One DC” was born out of that brainstorm. Once we started thinking about the variety of unique experiences that visitors can only have in D.C., we got super excited about the campaign messaging and creative. We took about a year to develop it in-house.

Fortunately, after a year-plus in market, we now know the campaign is resonating and has achieved record ROI with advertising effectiveness through visitor spending and taxes generated, according to an independent annual ROI study with Future Partners.





Tywana Minor

OWNER, LIVE TRAVEL GO

You balanced a full-time position in HR with your dream of curating travel experiences. What made you take the plunge into doing this work full time?

I've always loved travel and had an entrepreneurial spirit, but taking the leap wasn't an overnight decision. It was a dream I nurtured, prayed over, and strategically planned for over the years. My career in HR has been incredibly rewarding, and I will always stay connected to that world. However, I also witnessed firsthand the toll of burnout and fatigue in the workplace, which reinforced my belief in the importance of well-being and self-care. Over time, my inner voice grew louder and I knew it was time to bet on myself. I was ready to pivot and make the kind of impact I had always dreamed of — making a difference in people's lives that would inspire restoration, renewal and self-discovery.

What advice do you have for other women looking to pursue their entrepreneurial ventures?

Don't let fear be the biggest barrier to your dreams. And know that you are worthy! It's easy to focus on what could go wrong (that's human nature), but true growth comes from leaning into your vision with more faith than fear and then going for it. If you feel called to entrepreneurship, trust that desire and take action. Leverage the strengths and experiences that have shaped your success so far — those are the very tools that will help you navigate the journey ahead.

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

I lead with authenticity, inclusivity, integrity and a deep commitment to sustainability. Growth is a continuous journey, and I embrace it with humility — evolving, listening,

and refining my craft along the way. As I build my travel brand, my mission is to create experiences that leave a lasting impact, fostering meaningful connections and unforgettable journeys that enrich well-being and personal growth.

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

AI is revolutionizing not just travel, but every industry, making it essential to embrace, study and continuously adapt to its advancements. In the travel space, AI-driven personalization, automation, and predictive analytics will redefine the customer experience. I also see a shift toward more sustainability-focused travel experiences, which will shape and drive client expectations. Travelers are seeking more responsible, meaningful experiences. As a proud member of Tourism Cares, Live Travel Go is committed to promoting sustainable tourism that positively impacts communities and the planet.

What role do you think the travel industry should play in sustainable travel?

As a woman-owned, minority-owned business, I believe the travel industry has a responsibility to make sustainable tourism a priority. This means not only protecting the environment but also ensuring that underrepresented communities benefit from tourism's economic and cultural impact. By prioritizing partnerships with local businesses, amplifying diverse voices, and creating travel experiences that empower and uplift, we can build a more equitable and sustainable future for global tourism.

“As a woman-owned, minority-owned business, I believe the travel industry has a responsibility to make sustainable tourism a priority. This means not only protecting the environment but also ensuring that underrepresented communities benefit from tourism’s economic and cultural impact.”



Gissell Moronta

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES AND MARKETING,
ATRIUM HOSPITALITY

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

My leadership philosophy takes a holistic approach, focusing on understanding and empowering people as whole individuals. It's about supporting both their professional and personal growth, balancing the development of business skills with emotional intelligence.

This means working together to build strategic expertise, helping the team understand business dynamics and think critically while also prioritizing self-awareness, empathy and clear communication.

To me, mentorship is a two-way street where both people learn and grow together. By focusing on this well-rounded approach, it not only helps individuals progress but also drives the success of the entire organization.

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

It starts with me being real. If the leader is genuine and transparent, it sets the stage for others to feel comfortable bringing their true selves to work.

The key is also making a big deal out of celebrating differences. Everyone has their unique perspective, background and strengths, and I love learning about what makes each person tick (love languages, anyone?). Try to stay curious, ask questions, and really listen to understand where they're coming from and what they care about.

Inclusion is a personal core value for me; it's important that everyone feels invited to contribute and has the tools and support they need to succeed. Whether it's creating opportunities, encouraging open conversations, or just being a cheerleader for their ideas, everyone must feel like they're an important part of the team.

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

The two biggest challenges we face are integrating AI and technology into our processes while keeping the personal touch that makes our industry special. As AI continues to evolve, there's a real risk of over-reliance, leading to communication that feels robotic and disconnected from who we are.

Customers aren't just looking for efficiency; they want personalized experiences that feel thoughtful and genuine. The key is finding the perfect balance and using technology to enhance, not replace, human connection. It's about personalization at scale, leveraging AI for efficiency while ensuring every interaction still feels warm, authentic and uniquely ours.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

I'm fortunate to work for Atrium Hospitality, where developing future leaders is a top priority. Through our talent review process, we identify high-potential individuals and provide them with training, support and opportunities to stretch their skills and grow. We offer chances to lead committees and advisory boards (e.g., Sales, Operations, etc.), giving them a voice in shaping our company culture and elevating their big-picture thinking.

One program we're especially proud of is "WOMEN RISE," conceived and led by our chief HR officer. This nine-month curated program is designed to help women advance their careers and step into top leadership roles in hospitality. We create opportunities for them to lead initiatives, take on challenges, and build both their confidence and skills along the way.

I also believe in micro-coaching. Mentoring doesn't always have to be formal. Engaging in frequent and targeted conversations is often more effective due to the timing of situations and a less intimidating environment.

You've spoken about the imposter syndrome you've felt, particularly because English is your second language. How did you overcome that?

Being a woman and an immigrant comes with emotional trials — navigating belonging, being understood, and even facing moments where people mock your accent. These challenges are real, but I've learned that the biggest battle isn't external; it's internal. How we perceive ourselves, how we choose to show up, and the energy we bring into a room matters. In most cases, unkind treatment says more about the other person than it does about you. Often, the limitations we feel exist only in our minds. Realizing that "the cure" was an inside job was the turning point for me.

The key is ownership. Own your future. Educate yourself, seek mentors, read, take courses, make upskilling a habit, and put yourself in rooms where growth happens. Then, show up like you belong, carry yourself like you deserve it, celebrate wins with confidence, and welcome losses as lessons. At the end of the day, it all starts and ends with YOU.



Leyla Osorio

CEO AND CO-FOUNDER, GLOBAL CRUISES

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

My leadership philosophy is rooted in leading by example and discipline. I believe that effective leadership starts with setting an example. I make it a priority to demonstrate the values, work ethic and commitment I expect from my team.

I embody this philosophy by never asking my team to do something I wouldn't do myself. Whether it's taking on challenging tasks, maintaining high performance, or staying disciplined in our approach, I lead with integrity and consistency to inspire confidence and motivate my team to achieve our shared goals.

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

By highlighting their strengths and allowing them to reach their full potential. Through our Leadership Academy — a dynamic space with inspiring talks, hands-on activities, and collaboration — we provide the tools and confidence to take on new challenges.

At Global Cruises, we foster a safe, supportive environment where people from all backgrounds feel

respected and confident. I believe that while some leaders are born and others are made, recognizing individuals' strengths and challenging them beyond their comfort zones is essential. By providing the right tools to enhance their leadership skills, we empower them to achieve more than they ever imagined.

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

Innovation in experiential travel and technology is shaping the future of the shore excursions industry. At Global Cruises, we go beyond sightseeing by offering immersive experiences that allow guests to learn and engage with destinations in new ways.

Technologies like virtual reality and augmented reality are revolutionizing how we showcase destinations, offering guests the ability to experience faraway locations in a fully interactive and immersive manner. Additionally, technology has streamlined operations, making processes faster, reducing paperwork, and improving efficiency.

By combining cutting-edge technology with unique experiences, we're redefining how travelers discover, learn and connect with the world.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

At Global Cruises, we take a structured and strategic approach to succession planning and leadership development. Our Leadership Academy is at the core of this,



"I believe that while some leaders are born and others are made, recognizing individuals' strengths and challenging them beyond their comfort zones is essential."

providing employees with opportunities to strengthen their skills and grow into new roles.

Through the academy, employees gain a deep understanding of their future responsibilities, empowering them to lead by example. Additionally, we have established a career plan, working closely with our team to help them achieve their professional goals. By creating growth opportunities within the company, we ensure a strong leadership pipeline, fostering a culture of continuous development and long-term success.

What attracted you to the travel and hospitality industry, and what has kept you passionate about it?

In 2008, my journey into the travel and hospitality industry began unexpectedly during a visit to Barcelona. I realized I didn't just want to travel — I wanted to showcase destinations in new and unique ways. This passion for reinventing travel experiences led me into the industry.

What keeps me passionate is the people, diversity and cultures that make every destination special. The soul of a place is reflected in its people, and I find endless inspiration in that. As a traveler first, I knew this was the industry I wanted to be a part of forever.

“What keeps me passionate is the people, diversity and cultures that make every destination special. The soul of a place is reflected in its people.”





Julie Rath

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF AIRPORT OPERATIONS,
RESERVATIONS AND SERVICE RECOVERY, AMERICAN AIRLINES

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

Our purpose at American Airlines is to care for people on life's journey. That mission influences every decision regarding our customers and team members. I approach leadership with that as my guide — caring for our team with intentional engagement, empowering them to challenge the status quo and motivating them to drive results. At the heart of that is transparent communication — ensuring they know where we're going and how we're going to get there.

I think back to the mentors I've had throughout my life and career and it's important that I pay it forward and be that person our team members can go to for guidance, support and encouragement. I'm their biggest cheerleader and relish in the opportunity to celebrate our successes, both big and small. However, I also hold myself and our team accountable to continuously improve and meet goals that keep us reaching new benchmarks of success.

Above all, I want our team to know that I'm proud of them and that every team member plays a vital role in running a reliable operation and taking great care of our customers.

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

I spend a lot of time in the operation getting to know our frontline leaders and team members on a personal level and that's incredibly important to me. Our team members have invaluable perspectives on opportunities to improve our operations and customer experience, and oftentimes I learn the most by listening to their ideas.

I'm intentional about spending time in the operation — across our global network — and building mutual trust through transparency. And I always remember where I came from — how I progressed through my airline career and the mentors who helped develop me on that journey.

I'm a big believer in continuously raising the bar. My goal is to inspire our team members to challenge the way we operate and empower them to drive change for good.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

Developing our future leaders is one of my top priorities and I take great pride in the work we're doing to strengthen our team for the future. We're taking a comprehensive approach to talent development by identifying strengths and areas for growth that are specific to each team member and setting development and career paths for them.

For example, we encourage team members to move to positions that are a "stretch" role outside their area of expertise. This helps them to learn another area of the business and enables us to build a deeper bench of well-rounded, multiskilled leaders of the future. Team members with a deep knowledge of the operation are better at cross-department collaboration and can more easily overcome obstacles together. With an organization of 40,000 team members, I spend a lot of time with the leadership team focused on succession planning. And luckily, we have the best team in the business, so they run to the challenge. We have a laser focus on developing our future leaders and our entire senior leadership team is committed to serving as sturdy mentors that support our team in gaining more experience and growing their skillset.

Can you describe an innovative project you spearheaded in airport operations?

We created dynamic individual performance dashboards to track all facets of the Airports operation, from operational performance to customer experience and financial results. This example is close to my heart because it encompasses a few of my passions — innovative tools, setting goals, and comprehensive development.

We have dashboards that track performance by airport, and even more granular, every leader, team member and business partner have their own unique dashboard to provide clear targets for success and opportunities for growth. That has a direct impact on our customers as we focus on continuous improvement of the travel journey for them in operational excellence and customer service.





Susan Santiago

PRESIDENT, U.S. AND CANADA, HYATT HOTELS CORPORATION

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

At Hyatt, our purpose is to care for people so they can be their best. I pride myself on being in service to my team, our guests, and our owners. I've been with Hyatt for over 30 years, working my way through a series of progressively responsible positions before taking on the role of Hyatt's first woman president in the company's history. What I've found throughout these roles is the importance of demonstrating active listening, empathy, a commitment to the growth and development of others, and a focus on building trust and collaboration within teams. To me, business is personal. That is what compassionate servant leadership is all about.

"To me, business is personal. That is what compassionate servant leadership is all about."

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

At Hyatt, we're committed to leading inclusive teams and creating an environment where people can bring their whole selves to work each day. This enables employees to be their best and, in turn, better care for others. By intentionally creating a space where everyone feels they belong and can show up as their authentic selves, we're able to harness our collective strength. I want everyone to feel like they belong, because that's when the magic happens.

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

At Hyatt, we believe that innovative technologies and artificial intelligence help us advance care through data-driven decision-making and greater automation, ultimately freeing up capacity to focus more on human interactions and guest experiences. For example, we're expanding our use of AI to enhance on-property experiences and improve operational efficiency through tools that support tailored guest recommendations. This is a journey to build the Hyatt of the future, without ever losing our focus on care and our people — who are at the heart of Hyatt.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

Succession planning and leadership development are all about lifting others as we climb. I believe in creating opportunities for colleagues at every level to grow, whether through structured programs or by fostering a culture of





“The hospitality industry is an incredible community to be a part of — one where entry-level opportunities often lead to fulfilling, life-long careers that can change the trajectory of someone’s life.”

trust, collaboration and empowerment. We’ve been focused on providing the right tools and support to help colleagues advance in their careers, whether that’s through leadership coaching, skill-building initiatives, or programs designed to develop the next generation of general managers. At the heart of it all is care — not just for who our colleagues are, but how they are. Ensuring our teams feel supported and valued is key to developing strong, confident leaders for the future.

You began your career in hospitality as a server at a Hyatt property. What drove you to reach for excellence in your career?

I actually began my career in teaching before joining hospitality, and because of teaching I discovered my love for coaching and helping others learn. I’m a curious leader and thrive when I’m learning. Soon after I started my first job with Hyatt, I realized I had found my calling — to help others along their journeys in travel and life. The hospitality industry is an incredible community to be a part of — one where entry-level opportunities often lead to fulfilling, life-long careers that can change the trajectory of someone’s



life. The support of a mentor helped me recognize a leadership-driven career path. This is why I’ve been with Hyatt for over 30 years. The organization aligns with my core values and is committed to helping others build lifelong careers.



Jan Swartz

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, STRATEGIC OPERATIONS,
CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

I've been fortunate to work with many incredible leaders. I approach work and every interaction with curiosity and an openness to learning. I believe that listening is one of the most important leadership skills.

Today, I am a patchwork quilt of everything I've learned from others. I constantly incorporate new practices and tools into my life as I continue on this journey. These practices provide the physical stamina and emotional resilience necessary for supporting my team and making wise decisions.

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

I believe that as citizens of the world, we share much in common and can learn from one another. Diversity of perspective leads organizations to better answers. For me, it's been about being comfortable in my own skin and showing up as I am, and I've been warmly welcomed — even in the most exotic environments. Show up authentically, strive to do your best, and help support the team. Many great things will follow.

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

Generative AI is rapidly being recognized as a leading tool for business transformation across industries, especially travel and leisure. We recently adopted Microsoft Copilot, a new GenAI tool that enhances our productivity by providing real-time assistance, generating creative ideas, and making our workflows more efficient and enjoyable. AI also drives sustainability, which is a major focal point

for Carnival Corporation, by optimizing resources and supporting ESG goals. Organizations, including ours, that embed AI across core processes and view it as a strategic enabler will lead the next wave of innovation, setting the standard for growth, efficiency and long-term impact in an ever-evolving landscape.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

At Carnival Corporation, our succession planning focuses on identifying and nurturing talent at all levels, providing equal opportunities through training programs, mentorship, and leadership gatherings. By fostering an inclusive environment, we celebrate unique perspectives and experiences, which drive our innovation and success. Our goal is to cultivate leaders who reflect the global community, ensuring our leadership team is as varied and dynamic as our guests.

What role do you think the travel industry should play in addressing climate change?

Addressing climate change will require a worldwide commitment — across every business, every nation, and every sector of the global economy. At Carnival Corporation, we're doing our part to reduce our environmental impact by using fewer resources, pioneering new and more sustainable solutions, and cutting waste and emissions wherever possible. We have a proven, multidecade track record of working to achieve sustainable and responsible cruise operations. We share our progress annually in our Sustainability Report and invite you to check it out.

"I believe that as citizens of the world, we share much in common and can learn from one another. Diversity of perspective leads organizations to better answers."



Jennifer Weissman

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER,
PENN ENTERTAINMENT

What is your leadership philosophy and how do you embody it?

I encourage my team to be collaborative, curious, transparent and authentic. We set goals and expectations as a team, then each team member develops their set of initiatives to help the organization achieve those goals as well as the tracking to report on performance.

How do you ensure your teams feel included, valued and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work?

Each team member is provided clear goals and objectives, but it's really up to them to develop the plans to achieve those goals. While we work on the plans together, each team member is accountable for delivering and executing the results in their area. I believe providing accountability and autonomy are effective ways in ensuring people bring their best ideas to the table. This allows each team member to tap into their own creative beliefs and values to solve problems, reduce customer friction, and delight our customers. By having a diverse team focused and empowered to help solve business problems, we are continuously improving the customer and employee experience.

What innovative strategies or technologies do you see shaping the future of the industry?

Just like our customers' needs and expectations will evolve, so will the various technologies available to service them. With that said, I'm still of the belief that the companies that deliver the most compelling value propositions will win. To do this, we've deployed various real-time feedback capabilities to enable a two-way dialogue with our customers. The ability to gather and act on consumer feedback and sentiment on a real-time basis has proven invaluable.

How do you approach succession planning and developing future leaders within your organization?

On an annual basis we discuss the talent and bench strength as a senior executive team within the organization. Those conversations then cascade into additional discussions among my direct team members. I believe it's our job every day as leaders to develop a potential successor and ensure that person or persons is being provided the visibility within the organization and begins to take on greater responsibility as their tenure progresses.

Can you share an omnichannel marketing campaign you spearheaded that you're proud of?

At PENN Entertainment our loyalty program, PENN Play, was originally created for a retail casino-centric environment. I'm very proud of the work my team did to evolve this loyalty program into a compelling and effective omnichannel loyalty program. Through this work all of our PENN Play members are rewarded for their play behavior online, in our retail casinos, and throughout our various hospitality offerings. Every transaction within PENN is now rewarded with PENN Cash and tier points, increasing the loyalty our members have with the brand.

"By having a diverse team focused and empowered to help solve business problems, we are continuously improving the customer and employee experience."



MEMBER

Kris Jebson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS
AND EVENTS, MGM RESORTS INTERNATIONAL

How do you approach developing your leadership skills as you progress in your career?

I focus on continuous learning, self-reflection and adaptability. I actively seek mentorship from experienced leaders whom I admire and can learn from. I'm fortunate to work with so many talented leaders at MGM Resorts! Networking within my industry also helps me stay informed and gain new perspectives on leadership and the type of leader I want to be. I regularly assess my strengths and areas for growth, seeking feedback not only from leadership but also from my colleagues to fully understand how my actions impact others. This helps me improve my emotional intelligence, which is crucial for effective leadership.

How do you create or contribute to an inclusive work environment for your colleagues?

Creating and contributing to an inclusive work environment is a key priority for me. I believe diversity and inclusion are essential for fostering creativity, collaboration and a positive workforce culture. I promote open communication and collaboration, lead by example, encourage continuous education, and support work-life balance. I currently serve on the DE&I committee for the PCMA Greater Midwest Chapter, which has helped me improve my communication skills. My goal is to create a work environment where everyone feels respected, valued and empowered to be themselves.

What are your short- and long-term career goals, and how are you working toward them?

I'm relatively new to managing people, so my short-term goal is to hone my leadership abilities by taking on more responsibility within my organization. This includes improving my communication skills, learning how to effectively delegate tasks, and becoming better at leading

difficult conversations. Long term, over the next few years, I aim to pursue a more senior leadership role and take on challenging projects that will further accelerate my development. Building long-term relationships within the hospitality industry is crucial for professional growth. I will continue volunteering within industry organizations through board involvement and committee work, which will support my development both personally and professionally.

How do you manage feedback, both giving and receiving, to drive team success?

Managing feedback effectively, both giving and receiving, is essential for leading a team. When giving feedback, I make sure to start with the positive, acknowledging achievements and strengths before addressing areas for improvement. I find this approach creates a more receptive environment rather than focusing only on what needs to be fixed. I also ensure that feedback is a two-way conversation, not something I "talk at" the person. This helps develop solutions collaboratively and feels more empowering for both parties.

How is MGM Resorts International adapting to the younger generation's desire for more experiences?

MGM Resorts International is successfully adapting to the younger generation's preferences by embracing technology, offering unique and customizable experiences, prioritizing sustainability and volunteerism, and ensuring that our entertainment and dining options reflect modern tastes. Younger audiences, particularly millennials and Gen Z, expect seamless digital experiences. We've responded by implementing cutting-edge technology across our properties, including mobile apps for check-in, digital keys, room service ordering, dining reservations, and entertainment options. We always offer curated, personalized experiences for all our leisure and group customers.

"I focus on continuous learning, self-reflection and adaptability."

Our "Focused on What Matters" motto emphasizes sustainability and environmental responsibility, which are particularly important to younger generations. We've been proactive in implementing sustainable operations, including waste reduction, water conservation, and energy efficiency initiatives. Additionally, we prioritize social responsibility through community outreach programs, charity events, and partnerships that resonate with younger demographics, such as diversity and inclusion and social justice. We also recognize the influence of social media on younger generations' travel decisions, and our dedicated team leverages platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X, and YouTube to market visually compelling and shareable experiences.



Joi Light

MANAGER, INCLUSIVE CULTURE AND PEOPLE EXPERIENCE,
DELTA VACATIONS

How do you approach developing your leadership skills as you progress in your career?

As I progress in my career, my approach to developing leadership skills is recognizing that I will forever be a student and human. Both require levels of humility, accountability and vulnerability. There's always something new to learn and someone new to learn from. I've found that the same people you're in charge of leading are the same people who will teach you something ... specifically HOW to lead.

I'm constantly seeking opportunities to learn and grow from just being naturally curious. Constantly being a student will always be a priority for me, especially as newer

generations enter the workforce. They have new ways of communicating, introducing and executing unique ideas. I can't help them or support a team if I'm not open to new processes and new ways of thinking. A great way for me to exercise these skills is by mentoring others, both inside and outside of the company — it strengthens my ability to lead. Lastly, I don't run from challenging projects. I embrace collaboration and remain adaptable, as change is inevitable.

How do you create or contribute to an inclusive work environment for your colleagues?

My new role is built around contributing to an inclusive work environment. It's a fundamental part of my everyday life at work and in my personal life — it's truly a role built on passion and personal determination to create a more inclusive world. I contribute to this by weaving inclusion into everything, from ideation to execution with our strategy. As strategies develop, you consider who the audience is. When we start thinking through who those people are, that's when we start asking the right questions such as, "Am I being inclusive of everyone?" "How can this potentially be interpreted?" and, of course, "Who am I NOT reaching and what can we do to change that?"

Strategies are intentional and set the foundation for your goals. Inclusivity can't be a goal in a strategy; it must BE the foundation. Also, one of the many incredible benefits of working for Delta Vacations, a wholly owned subsidiary of Delta Air Lines, is having access to its business resource groups (BRGs). These groups provide networking opportunities and platforms to share diverse perspectives, all while celebrating inclusion. I'm currently a member of BOLD (Black Community Business Resource Group), Yallah (Middle East and North Africa Business Resource Group), and Working Families. As a member of these groups, I'm able to bring back ideas to my team that contribute to a more inclusive work environment.



"There's always something new to learn and someone new to learn from."





What are your short- and long-term career goals, and how are you working toward them?

My short-term career goals include continuing to improve my leadership skills and making an impact on my teams and company by inspiring meaningful change. A priority for me is to continue expanding my network in the industry and being a sponge. Ideally, I would like to keep connecting my professional goals to my personal core values, such as creativity and resourcefulness. My short-term goals also include dedicating more time to my travel blogging and content creation outside of my full-time corporate role. My long-term career goals, like most in management, is to eventually step into a more senior leadership role by continuing to focus on my influence as a mentor and being an example of a good leader. I plan to work towards these short- and long-term goals by seeking leadership support, staying on top of trends, and jumping headfirst into cross-functional initiatives.

How do you manage feedback, both giving and receiving, to drive team success?

Feedback is crucial for my growth as well as the success of my team. When it comes to receiving feedback, I realize that the delivery can sometimes be misconstrued. Therefore, it's important to stay focused on the actual message and that the goal of the feedback is to see me improve. I do my best to stay open-minded and view it as a chance to be better. If someone doesn't give you feedback and just stands by while you continue to make the same mistakes or not improve, they don't have your success at the top of mind. When leaders give feedback, it shows they care and they want to see you succeed. I make a genuine effort to process feedback without defensiveness and show my gratitude by applying it in a way that strengthens my performance and contributions.

Giving feedback is pretty much the reverse of this, so I try to stay mindful of triggers for certain people when it comes to the delivery of feedback. Not everyone takes feedback well or as intended, so I try to tailor my feedback based on the recipient. I focus on being clear and constructive in a way that motivates rather than discourages when giving feedback.



How does Delta Vacations approach succession planning and developing future leaders, specifically women?

While we don't have a rigid succession plan in place, leadership development is something we naturally foster, especially given our rare workforce of being 85 percent women. Our approach to developing future leaders is embedded in our culture through mentorship, leadership development programs, and strong emphasis on encouraging our leaders to explore various parts of the business. Additionally, our leaders prioritize knowledge-sharing and professional development, encouraging women at all levels to develop a variety of skills through courses to advance in their careers. As Delta Vacations continues to grow, I can see opportunities to formalize this approach.



Holly Moreland

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF MARKETING TECHNOLOGY, HILTON

How do you approach developing your leadership skills as you progress in your career?

I'm always looking to improve my leadership skills, both formally and informally. I'm fortunate to work for a company that offers a lot of resources in leadership, be it self-lead virtual courses or on-the-job leadership skills courses. Informally, in addition to reading books and listening to podcasts on the topic, I find that watching leaders I respect and asking them for advice and guidance is invaluable. We all have our own unique leadership style but I like to take traits and learnings from leaders I've found impactful and adopt them in a way that's authentic to me.

How do you create or contribute to an inclusive work environment for your colleagues?

My hope is that by bringing my authentic self to work and being vulnerable, I'm helping to create an environment where others feel safe to show up as themselves as well. It's not just about inclusivity but also about celebrating the differences, be it acknowledging different cultural backgrounds or even diversity of thought and encouraging an atmosphere where the team is comfortable debating ideas without fear of judgement.

What are your short- and long-term career goals, and how are you working toward them?

I've never been overly prescriptive with my career path and goals. Instead, I tend to follow my energy and curiosity, which so far has worked out for me. Luckily the marketing technology space evolves quickly so it keeps me engaged and wanting to learn more which tends to open doors to new opportunities more organically as long as you're putting in the work.

How do you manage feedback, both giving and receiving, to drive team success?

Feedback is a gift, and that mindset shift helps with both giving and receiving. Constructive feedback can be difficult to give and even harder to hear, but it's so critical for growth. In giving feedback, clarity is key, so I try to be specific and instructive. Instead of vague statements, pinpoint exact actions and their impact. Timeliness is also critical — I try to give feedback as close to the event as possible. In receiving feedback, clarity is also important. Don't be afraid to ask questions and then reflect and be honest with yourself on what you heard and what you might do to change.

What is a marketing technology trend that you're closely following in 2025?

Of course the AI space continues to be an interesting landscape to watch with new players emerging and a proliferation of applications for it, but what really interests me is how it can support the scaling of things like personalization and support better insight feedback loops for faster optimization and helping uncover opportunities in data.

"I've never been overly prescriptive with my career path and goals. Instead, I tend to follow my energy and curiosity."



Danica Posey

DIRECTOR OF HOTEL OPERATIONS,
LEGOLAND CALIFORNIA RESORT

“I create a culture of trust by normalizing feedback as a tool for growth rather than criticism.”

How do you approach developing your leadership skills as you progress in your career?

I prioritize continuous learning through mentorship, industry conferences, and certifications. Networking within organizations like HFTP and Women Leading Travel & Hospitality allows me to exchange ideas and refine my skills. I also embrace feedback from peers and team members to identify areas for growth and adapt my leadership style to align with the evolving needs of the industry.

How do you create or contribute to an inclusive work environment for your colleagues?

I focus on fostering a culture of belonging by championing diversity in hiring practices and ensuring every team member's voice is valued. Regular check-ins, training on unconscious bias, and open forums for feedback empower colleagues to feel heard and respected. I also celebrate cultural differences and encourage collaborative problem-solving to strengthen our team.

What are your short- and long-term career goals, and how are you working toward them?

In the short term, I aim to enhance digital transformation initiatives and streamline operations at LEGOLAND California Resort. Long term, I aspire to take on an executive leadership role within the travel and hospitality sector, contributing to innovation and sustainability. I am working toward these goals by leading impactful projects, expanding my professional network, and engaging in leadership development programs.

How do you manage feedback, both giving and receiving, to drive team success?

I create a culture of trust by normalizing feedback as a tool for growth rather than criticism. When giving feedback, I focus on clarity and actionable steps. When receiving it, I remain open and reflective, ensuring alignment with team goals. Regular performance discussions ensure continuous improvement and mutual accountability.

Your role at LEGOLAND is unique compared to more typical hotel operations positions. What surprised you the most going into this role?

The transition from luxury resorts to overseeing operations at a family-themed park like LEGOLAND California Resort was both exciting and eye-opening. I was surprised by how critical it was to balance the high standards of hospitality with the dynamic, family-centric nature of a theme park. It required an entirely new mindset, focusing on delivering immersive, memorable experiences for families while maintaining operational efficiency across diverse departments. The collaborative energy between park and hotel operations has been especially rewarding.



Anel Ruiz

MANAGING DIRECTOR, PEOPLE IMPACT, UNITED AIRLINES

How do you approach developing your leadership skills as you progress in your career?

Staying curious is critically important. It's important to ensure you're not just hungry to learn but make it a consistent practice to seek out knowledge, challenge your own thinking, and stay humble to know that you don't know everything. I also learn so much from other people. I'm title agnostic; everyone around you regardless of level should have a skill, a point of view, or an experience that enhances the team and has something new to teach you.

How do you create or contribute to an inclusive work environment for your colleagues?

I once worked for a leader that would say and practice, "Everyone is around this table for a reason," I've adopted this as I've grown as a leader. I firmly believe in creating an environment where everyone has the agency to contribute openly and meaningfully to the team.

What are your short- and long-term career goals, and how are you working toward them?

I firmly believe I have the best job in the world. In that capacity, I'm committed to continuing to contribute to building on United's vibrant and dynamic workplace culture. We're doing this through our work with United's incredibly dynamic employee-led business resource groups (BRGs) and as we continue to cast a wide net for the best qualified talent.

How do you manage feedback, both giving and receiving, to drive team success?

Feedback is a gift and it needs to be timely, empathetic and actionable. It's important to ensure we use feedback as a coaching session, using it as a moment to build trust, to recognize that there's support for everyone to learn and grow. Equally important is noticing the good, celebratory moments and acknowledging the good work.

How does United Airlines approach succession planning and developing future leaders, specifically women?

United has longstanding leadership programs accessible to all employees, such as the self-paced learning experience, Leadership Institute, and the Leading Together (L3 and L4) program, a targeted development initiative for high-performing senior managers and managers. Our BRG, uIMPACT (Initiate Movement. Purposeful Advancement. Connect Together.), is committed to supporting all talent by creating opportunities to enrich company culture and empowering all employees, particularly women. uIMPACT helps increase the participation of women throughout the pipeline, from girls in STEM to recruitment. United has been a proud partner of Women in Aviation International (WAI) for many years and we work together to help women thrive in aviation. uIMPACT also teams up with WAI to host Girls in Aviation Day events at our stations around the world. These events draw thousands of young women from across the country and around the world to learn more about aviation career fields and STEM.

"Everyone around you regardless of level should have a skill, a point of view, or an experience that enhances the team and has something new to teach you."



Who We Are

Allianz Partners

As a global leader in travel and specialty insurance, Allianz Partners has a long history of helping people—anytime, almost anywhere. And whether it's that once-in-a-lifetime trip, tickets to an epic concert, or pre-paid registration fees for the next big marathon, life can sometimes throw a wrench in the best of plans. Every year, more than 100 million people worldwide choose us to protect their experiences, and we take pride in exceeding their expectations. As an established company with both a long, proven track record and a commitment to innovation, we're uniquely suited to deliver ideal solutions that meet your customers' ever-changing needs. Visit www.allianzpartners.com to learn more.



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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