



Taking Steps to Increase Women Leadership in Travel and Tourism

Witti Announces Upcoming Senior Women Leaders' Forum

WASHINGTON, DC – April 12, 2023 – [Women in Travel and Tourism International](#) (witti) will convene an industry leadership forum in Washington D.C. on April 18 to address gender-based power imbalances that risk impacting the domestic and global tourism industry.

“As with all industries, women play a significant role in the travel and leisure workforce but represent less than ten percent of top leadership roles,” noted [Laura Mandala](#) of [Mandala Research](#). “Developing and empowering the existing talent pool is critical to the long-term success of the sector as well as building true and lasting equity in the industry. At this conference, we plan to craft an inclusive roadmap that builds on past successes while looking forward the future.”

The conference’s theme is: “What’s Next for Women’s Leadership in Travel and Tourism”.

Recent research has revealed that women represent half of the travel and leisure workforce, but represent only 7 percent of CEOs, according to a [study from Aptamind and the World Travel and Tourism Council](#) (WTTC.)

Forum speakers include:

- [Tori Barnes](#), Executive Vice President, [U.S. Travel Association](#);
- [Anne Madison](#), Senior Vice President, [Cruise Lines International Association](#),
- [Maribel Rodriguez](#), Senior Vice President, [World Travel and Tourism Council](#),
- [Melissa Cherry](#), Senior Vice President, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, [Miles Partnership](#),
- [Rori Ferensic](#), Senior Vice President, [Destinations International](#),
- [Lan Elliott](#), [Castell@College](#) (an [AHLA Foundation](#) project), and
- [Delegate Charniele Herring](#), Virginia House of Delegates.

“This conference will send a clear message to the next generation of women leaders aspiring to work in the travel and leisure industry that says: ‘you are welcome, wanted and can thrive here,’” added Mandala. “If we want to attract the best and the brightest talent, we must demonstrate that there are attainable paths to leadership within the industry.”

“WTTC’s Women Initiative proudly recognizes the contribution of women around the globe as we work to build an equitable environment where women thrive as leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators,” [Maribel Rodriguez](#), Senior Vice President, [WTTC](#). “This type of public-private-academic partnership is essential to charting a path forward that lead to true gender equality for all. Right now, we know that barriers to leadership are preventing brilliant and talent leaders who happen to be women from moving our industry forward. The time for change is now.”

According to [Anne Madison](#), Senior Vice President, [Cruise Lines International Association](#), which is a sponsor of witti and the event “Within the maritime industry, women in the cruise industry lead in terms

of holding leadership positions—from the bridge, to the executive suite, to the board room. Yet, much more work remains to achieve gender equality by 2030, as expressed in goal 5 of the 17 sustainable development goals established by the United Nations: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The travel and tourism industry can be a catalyst for change by demonstrating its leadership toward the achievement of this important goal. By engaging in meaningful dialogue through witti and other leadership organizations, we not only increase awareness about the importance of gender equality, we also accelerate progress by generating new ideas and initiatives that help increase resources, networks, training, recognition, and respect for women worldwide.”

Mandala plans for the forum to launch the development of a blueprint with the group that set the course for guiding new industry initiatives.

The Forum begins with networking, an important and often undervalued aspect of climbing the corporate ladder. The Forum will be available online, enabling participants from across the globe to join the dialogue and further expanding the reach of this vital conversation.

In-person and virtual registration is available here: <https://conta.cc/3mrc1CP>.

Sponsors include:

- [Cruise Lines International Association](#)
- [Event Transportation Systems](#)
- [Miles Partnership](#)
- [Mandala Research](#)
- [Las Vegas Convention and Visitors' Authority](#)
- [World Tourism Network](#)
- [Destination Innovate](#)
- [AHLA Foundation](#)
- [Women in Hospitality Leadership Alliance](#)
- [Castell@College](#)
- [DEI Advisors](#)
- [No Vacancy Live Podcast](#)
- [National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Response Marketing Group](#)
- [George Washington University](#)

About witti

witti’s mission is to enhance the success of women in the travel and tourism industry through peer-to-peer networking, mentoring, lead sharing, and giving back to the global travel community in meaningful ways. The specific benefits witti offers its members include: conferences and networking connections; opportunity for recognition at the Top Women in Travel awards; education and professional development; advocacy in promoting the visibility of women in the senior ranks of the travel industry; and research on the status of women in industry. For more information about witti, contact Laura@womenintravelandtourism.com, visit womenintravelandtourism.com, and follow @wittiorg on Twitter.

Media contact:

Paul Wilke
Upright Position Communications
Tel: +1-415-881-7995
Email: paul@uprightcomms.com