



CARIBBEAN  
HOTEL & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION

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**CHTA'S EMIL LEE ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE TEAM,  
PRESENTS INITIATIVES FOCUSED ON EDUCATION,  
RESULTS IN RE-ENERGIZED MEMBERS AT MARKETPLACE**

THE CARIBBEAN (Feb. 9, 2015) – Emil Lee, president of the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA), introduced a new executive team and announced several new initiatives designed to help members make more money as Caribbean Travel Marketplace opened in San Juan at the Puerto Rico Convention Center last week.

Marketplace was again a very successful event drawing 301 buyer delegates from 102 companies representing 17 countries that are driving business to the region including Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Dominican Republic, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom and United States. Out of the 102 companies, there were 14 new buyer companies participating for the first time seven from the USA, two from both Canada and Poland and one each from Brazil, Japan and UK. There were 272 supplier companies from 29 countries and 1,084 total delegates in attendance. Buyers and supplier companies pre-scheduled 11,888 appointments with each other in advance while additional appointments were made onsite.

In introducing the new executive team Lee said: “Without the right people in place to execute, our vision will never come to fruition.” As he announced that Frank Comito, former Association Executive with the Bahamas and past president of the Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives, would become the new CEO the room was abuzz with excitement, especially from the other hotel association executives and presidents.

The CHTA Executive Board also created a new position of Chief Marketing Officer and named Matt Cooper, long-time allied member of CHTA to the post.

And when Lee announced that “we have taken this opportunity to promote one of our own to the new position of Chief Operating Officer (COO)” and named long-time CHTA employee Vanessa Ledesma, the audience roared with approval. It was a good start to a successful event.

When Lee talked about further re-energizing the membership and discussed a number of issues facing the Caribbean he added: “The reality is that everyone in this room has a vested interest in these issues. Ultimately, whether you are a tour operator selling Caribbean product, or an allied company selling your products to the Caribbean, or a Caribbean based business; We all benefit from a healthy and vibrant Caribbean.

“Marketplace is in the process of evolving into an event focused on increasing revenue. So in addition to the traditional conference, we will be adding seminars aimed at helping hotels to supplement revenues by increasing direct bookings and yield management strategies.

“In October of this year, we will host the first Caribbean Hospitality Industry Education Forum (CHIEF) conference in Puerto Rico at El Conquistador. CHIEF will draw on some of the most successful elements of CHIC and the Small Hotels Retreat but it will also be adding educational seminars where our allied members will be teaching our hotels practical money saving tips and revenue generating strategies.

“In short, we are building two events focused on helping members to make more money, increase efficiency and productivity while saving money, these will be events that you simply can’t afford to miss.

### **Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association**

The Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) facilitates the full potential of the Caribbean hotel and tourism industry by serving members’ needs and building partnerships in a socially responsible and sustainable manner. CHTA is the voice of the Caribbean hospitality industry for the development of the region in the highly competitive and sophisticated environment of international tourism. Today, tourism is widely recognized as a pivotal industry in the economy of the region – and CHTA functions as the common denominator for this industry in a region of diverse nationalities, languages and styles, identifying mutual problems

and marshaling the resources of the active and allied members to devise solutions. CHTA represents all facets of the hospitality industry with more than 600 member hotels and over 300 allied members.

CHTA, including the events staged by the association, is supported by Strategic Partners MasterCard, Interval International, OBM International, HVS, Tambourine and TravelZoo.

**For more information, visit <http://www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com>. Follow CHTA on Facebook [Facebook.com/CaribbeanHotelandTourismAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/CaribbeanHotelandTourismAssociation) and Twitter [Twitter.com/CHTAFeeds](https://twitter.com/CHTAFeeds).**

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