

# Speaker Biographies



## **Scott Beck**

*President and CEO, Visit Salt Lake*

Scott Beck was raised with tourism as the driving force in his family. Scott's father, Brent Beck, was the General Manager of the Sundance Resort for 22 years. Scott is currently President/CEO of Visit Salt

Lake. Visit Salt Lake's mission statement is to enhance the area's economy by acquiring and servicing conventions, leisure travelers, and visitors to Salt Lake County. Prior to joining Visit Salt Lake, Scott was the General Manager of the Salt Lake City Marriott City Center hotel and worked with the Salt Lake Olympic Organizing Committee as a host hotel during the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympic games. In addition to his responsibilities with the Marriott City Center, Scott oversaw Bud World, Budweiser's public Olympic experience. Scott is a member of the Salt Lake Chamber Board of Governors, the Executive Committee of Destination Marketing Association International, and serves on the APEX Green Meetings Council. True to his roots, Scott is still an active skier, biker and outdoor enthusiast.



## **Sarah Best**

*Web Specialist, Chicago Office of Tourism and Culture*

As a Web Specialist for the Chicago Office of Tourism and Culture (COTC), Sarah Best develops content and social media strategy for ExploreChicago.org and has

been a pioneer in using Foursquare and SCVNGR to drive people to Chicago's neighborhoods while engaging in fun experiences. COTC was one of Foursquare's first business partners and has three Foursquare badges, six Foursquare movie experiences including a new Transformers 3 experience, and eight SCVNGR treks. COTC's technology partnerships have garnered over 100 media placements including articles in *Mashable*, *TechCrunch*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *GO* (AirTran's InFlight Magazine), the *Chicago Tribune*, *Crain's Chicago Business*, and others. Sarah is the recipient of 2011 Illinois Excellence in Tourism Award, a 2010 Communicator Award, and a 2010 North American Travel Journalists Association Award for Social Media Marketing. Sarah is a graduate of the Gallatin School of Individualized Study at New York University. [www.sarahbest.net](http://www.sarahbest.net)



## **Jennifer Carnam**

*Vice President of Marketing, Richmond Metropolitan Convention & Visitors Bureau*

As VP of Marketing for Richmond Metropolitan Convention & Visitors Bureau (RMCVB), Jennifer oversees

website development, online marketing, advertising, public relations, tourism sales, events and Visitor Center operations. Jennifer's 30 years of industry experience includes leading tourism research at Southeastern Institute of Research in Richmond, VA, and serving as chief marketing executive for Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc., in Memphis, TN, with responsibility for global brand management, advertising and online marketing for the world-famous Elvis Presley brand and Elvis Presley's Graceland. She also held corporate, director-level brand marketing positions at Harrah's Entertainment, Inc., as well as the Homewood Suites, Hampton Inn, and Embassy Suites hotel brands. A member of U.S. Travel Association's NCDO Board, she also serves on the Advisory Board of J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College's School of Culinary Arts, Tourism and Hospitality, the Venture Richmond Marketing/Advocacy Committee, and the Signature Events and Activities Work Group for the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission.



## **Chip Conley**

*Executive Chairman and Chief Creative Officer, Joie de Vivre Hotels*

Chip Conley is founder and executive chairman of Joie de Vivre, America's second largest boutique hotel company. In 2010, Joie de Vivre won Market Metrix's

#1 customer service award—over Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, Sheraton, Westin, Kimpton, and Peninsula hotels. Chip shares the theory that transformed his business, and his unique prescription for success, in his bestselling book *PEAK: How Great Companies Get Their Mojo from Maslow*. His next book, *Emotional Equations: Simple Truths for Creating Happiness & Success*, will be out in January 2012. Honored by the *San Francisco Business Times* as the "Most Innovative CEO" in the Bay Area, Chip is the founder of San Francisco's annual Celebrity Pool Toss fundraiser, which has raised more than \$4 million for inner city families. Chip received his BA and MBA from Stanford University and was bestowed an honorary doctorate in psychology from Saybrook Graduate School in 2009. [www.chipconley.com](http://www.chipconley.com) and [www.peakorganizations.com](http://www.peakorganizations.com).

## Speaker Biographies continued



**Marian DeLay**  
*Executive Director,*  
Moab Area Travel Council

Marian DeLay is the Executive Director of the Moab Area Travel Council in Moab, Utah. Marian has been in this position for the past 16 years and prior to this was the Director of Sales and Front Office Manager at the Ramada Inn in Moab. She is a member of the U.S. Travel Association, NTA, Utah Tourism Industry Coalition, Utah Association of Destination Marketing Organizations, Grand Circle Association, Moab Chamber of Commerce and co-director of the Southern Utah National Park Advertising Coalition.



**Roger Dow**  
*President and CEO,*  
U.S. Travel Association

Roger Dow is president and chief executive officer of the U.S. Travel Association, the national umbrella organization representing all segments of the \$759 billion U.S. travel and tourism industry. U.S. Travel works to increase travel to and within the United States through a substantial advocacy effort that communicates industry interests to policymakers and the media. U.S. Travel also presents several major events to provide travel industry professionals with expert information and business opportunities that give them a competitive advantage in the marketplace. U.S. Travel is headquartered in Washington, D.C. with an active presence in Europe, Asia and Latin America. Dow has served in his present position since January 1, 2005 and has led the Association through a transformative era, enabling a greater appreciation for travel within the national economy. Prior to joining U.S. Travel, Dow rose through the ranks at Marriott International in a career that began as a summer lifeguard at the company's sixth hotel and spanned 34 years. He capped his Marriott career as Senior Vice President, Global and Field Sales, leading Marriott's 10,000-person worldwide sales organization. His many accomplishments for the company included development of Marriott Rewards, the world's leading frequent traveler program.



**James P. (Jim) Evans**  
*CEO, Corporation for Travel Promotion*

James P. (Jim) Evans, Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for Travel Promotion, is an acknowledged industry leader in global hospitality with 30 years of experience in domestic and international sales and marketing, management and operations. The former CEO of Jenny Craig and Best Western International, Jim is widely recognized for his ability to build and lead dynamic teams, develop clear direction, achieve measurable goals and create deep value for his organization. Prior to Best Western International, Jim held several executive positions at Hyatt Hotels and Resorts, including Senior Vice President of Operations and Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing, where he initiated an aggressive international marketing effort. Most recently, Jim established Ardent Hotel Advisors (AHA) in 2006, where he served as CEO and Co-Founder. AHA was created to provide the best-in-class hotel management services to institutional and private owners.



**Amir Eylon**  
*State Tourism Director,*  
Ohio Tourism Division

Amir Eylon, Ohio's State Tourism Director, leads the Tourism Division's efforts to drive economic development by marketing the state's leisure tourism experiences. The division's goal is to attract travelers from outside the State to Ohio, promote travel within the state, and sell Ohio's unique business opportunities for the travel industry. A 20-year veteran of the tourism industry, Amir was named the recipient of the prestigious Paul Sherlock Award in 2010 by the Ohio Travel Association, becoming the first State Tourism Director to ever win Ohio's highest tourism honor for leadership and contribution to the state's tourism industry. Amir is an active member on a number of statewide and national boards including: Board of Directors of the National Council of State Tourism Directors; Board of Directors of the International Travel & Tourism Research Association; Chairman of the Great Lakes of North America; a Commissioner on the Ohio State Expo Commission; and the Board of Trustees of the Ohio Historical Society.

## Speaker Biographies continued



**Geoff Freeman**  
*Executive Vice President,*  
U.S. Travel Association

Geoff is executive vice president of the U.S. Travel Association, the nation's leading voice for increasing travel to and within the United States. He is responsible for driving the travel industry's response to the latest challenges and seeks to position travel as a critical asset to the country, American business, and the traveling public. Under his leadership, the industry has enacted the Travel Promotion Act, referred to by *Travel Weekly* as the "industry's biggest legislative victory in a decade;" derailed an assault on corporate meetings and events through the highly successful *Meetings Mean Business* campaign; and begun the march to building an army of one million employee activists via its burgeoning Power of Travel Coalition. Geoff has led a variety of complex and successful issue campaigns during his fifteen years in Washington. Previously, Geoff was a vice president with APCO Worldwide, a global public affairs firm, where he led the highly visible Partnership for Prescription Assistance (PPA). The PPA, supported by America's pharmaceutical companies, was the largest effort ever created to connect uninsured Americans with free prescription medicines.



**Larry Friedman**  
*Interim Director,* Nevada  
Commission on Tourism

Larry Friedman has been Interim Director of the Nevada Commission on Tourism since November 2010 while continuing with his responsibilities as Deputy Director of Sales and Industry Partners. He has been with the agency since 1990 first serving as Grants and Research Manager and later as Director of Rural Programs. Larry worked in the hotel and attractions part of the industry before the state of Nevada. His first job in tourism was as a nightclub tour guide in San Francisco.



**Jeremy Gutsche**  
*Founder,* Trendhunter.com,  
*Author of* ***Exploiting Chaos***

Jeremy Gutsche, MBA, CFA, is an innovation expert, the award-winning author of *Exploiting Chaos: 150 Ways to Spark Innovation During Times of Change*, host of Trend Hunter TV, a judge on BNN's TV show, *The Pitch*. Jeremy is also the founder of TrendHunter.com, the world's largest, most popular collection of cutting edge trends, attracting nearly half a billion total views. Prior to Trend Hunter, Jeremy was one of Capital One's youngest Business Directors and innovation leads. At age 28, he led his team to grow a \$1 billion product portfolio. Routinely sourced by the media, Jeremy's broad appeal ranges from *The Economist* and CNN to *Entertainment Tonight* and *The New York Times*. He has been described as "a new breed of trend spotter" by *The Guardian*, "an eagle eye" by *Global TV*, an "Oracle" by the *Globe and Mail*, an "intellectual can of Red Bull" by *Association Week* and "on the forefront of cool" by MTV.



**Brenda Harper**  
*Director,* Travel Services Section,  
*Travel Information Division,* Texas  
Department of Transportation

Brenda J. Harper has been director of the Travel Services Section of Texas Department of Transportation's Travel Information Division since 2003. As director, she oversees various operations and programs including management of the 12 Texas Travel Information Centers and their respective maintenance programs. The counselors are the front-line ambassadors in Texas' \$60.6 billion travel industry assisting 2.6 million travelers annually with an economic impact to the state of more than \$89.5 million dollars. Brenda also oversees the Highway Condition Reporting System and 1-800 number for road condition and travel planning information. While these services prove valuable to travelers under any circumstance, they become invaluable life-saving tools at times of crisis such as when hurricanes threaten the Texas coast or any major weather event, flooding or snow/ice storms, across Texas. Brenda is a Michigan State University graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in hotel, restaurant and institutional management.

# Speaker Biographies continued



**David Huether**  
*Senior Vice President, Research,*  
U.S. Travel Association

David Huether is the Senior Vice President for Research at the U.S. Travel Association, where he manages the association's economic, marketing, and advocacy research programs. Prior to joining U.S. Travel in January 2011, David served as the Chief Economist of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) where he served as the organization's economic forecaster as well as a principal spokesman on economic matters important to America's industrial base. Before coming to the NAM in 1997, he worked as an economist with the Bureau of Economic Analysis at U.S. Department of Commerce. David received his undergraduate degree from Guilford College in 1990 and his graduate degree in economics from the George Washington University in 1997.



**Shama Kabani**  
*CEO, The Marketing Zen Group, Author,*  
*The Zen of Social Media Marketing*

Web and TV personality. Bestselling author. International Speaker. Award winning CEO of The Marketing Zen Group—a global digital marketing firm. Shama is the face of today's digital world, and represents the best her generation has to offer. She has aptly been dubbed the "master millennial of the universe" and "an online marketing shaman" by Fast Company.com. Shama holds a Masters degree in Organizational Communication from the University of Texas at Austin, and prides herself in being a constant learner. Through her web marketing company, Shama works with businesses and organizations around the world. In 2009, *Business Week* honored Shama as one of the Top 25 under 25 entrepreneurs in North America. In 2010, Shama won the prestigious Technology Titan Emerging Company CEO award. Her first book, *The Zen of Social Media Marketing* (BenBella Books) was released in April, 2010 and was an instant hit.



**Kevin Kane**  
*President and CEO, Memphis Convention*  
*& Visitors Bureau (MCVB)*

Kevin Kane is president and CEO of the Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau and president of its subsidiary MMG LLC, which manages the Memphis Cook Convention Center and the Cannon Center for the Performing Arts. He also serves as chairman of the Destination Marketing Association International and board member of U.S. Travel Association. He sits on the International Tennis Hall of Fame Executive Committee. Mr. Kane serves as chairman of the Memphis Rock 'N' Soul Museum, executive committee member and past chairman of the Blues Foundation, executive committee member of Memphis-Shelby County Sports Authority, and board member of Riverfront Development Corporation, Metropolitan Memphis Hotel & Lodging Association, Christian Brothers High School, Memphis Regional Chamber of Commerce and Junior League of Memphis. He has been recognized as Outstanding Young Tennessean, 2007 Memphis PRSA Communicator of the Year, Dean Campbell Award for Community Service, Christian Brothers High School Hall of Fame, St. Michael School Distinguished Alumnus, and Downtowner of the Decade by *Memphis Downtowner Magazine*.



**William Karz**  
*Director, Online Marketing,*  
LA INC. The Los Angeles  
Convention and Visitors Bureau

An LA native who began his career with LA INC. five years ago in the capacity of Staff Editor, Bill Karz has consistently been discovering new ways to engage readers and more specifically web visitors by introducing the bureau to modern online marketing and social media strategies. Since assuming the role of Online Marketing Director, Bill has grown LA INC.'s facebook fanbase to 320,000 fans and integrated community and member outreach programs with the social space. These programs include social media member events and cultural photo and video tours for the LA community.

## Speaker Biographies continued



**Jan Kostner**

*Deputy Director, Office of Tourism, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity*

As deputy director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism (IOT),

Jan V. Kostner spearheads the state's tourism industry marketing and development efforts, contributing to sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents. She has implemented a wide array of successful state tourism initiatives since her appointment in March 2003, including the internationally celebrated Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, the unveiling of Jane, a rare juvenile T-Rex, in Rockford and coordinating marketing efforts for the Lincoln Bicentennial events. Also under her tutelage, IBOT has implemented innovative partnerships that increase Illinois' exposure nationally and directly impact travel bookings. Prior to joining IOT, Kostner was a senior vice president for Chicago-based public affairs and strategic communications firm Jasculca/Terman. She holds a bachelor's degree in communications from New England College in Henniker, N.H. and resides in Chicago.



**John Lambeth**

*President and Founder, Civitas*

John Lambeth is a California attorney specializing in creating tourism improvement districts, a stable, dedicated source of funding for destination marketing. He has over fifteen

years' experience working with destination marketing organizations and lodging business to create tourism districts. He has assisted with formation and renewal of over 100 improvement districts, including the vast majority of California's 59 tourism districts. John has written enabling legislation for special districts in California, Nevada, and Hawaii, and he is working on legislation and districts in two additional American states, plus El Salvador and Brazil. His areas of expertise include drafting legislation, strategizing for successful adoption of legislation, outreach and consensus building to business owners and local officials, document preparation, ballot and petition drive management, and local government hearing processes.



**Andy Levine**

*President and Chief Creative Officer, Development Counsellors International*

Andy Levine is President of Development Counsellors International (DCI), a firm that specializes in all phases of travel and economic development marketing.

The DCI team has worked with the broadest range of destinations including cities/regions (Park City, Utah; Portland, Oregon; Toronto, Ontario; Williamsburg, Virginia), states (California, Massachusetts, New Mexico) and countries (Colombia, Dubai and Scotland). Since 1960, the firm has worked with over 400 tourism and economic development organizations. Areas of expertise include editorial placement/media relations, destination representation, meeting and incentive (MICE) marketing, special events, consumer promotions, crisis communication and community branding. The Johnny Cash tune, *I've Been Everywhere, Man* could be Andy's theme song—and he has the frequent flyer miles to prove it.



**Margo Metzger**

*Public Relations Manager, North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film & Sports Development*

Margo Metzger directs the public relations program for the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports

Development. She works with domestic and international journalists and editors to generate editorial coverage and attract visitors to North Carolina. Margo graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Arts in journalism and mass communication. She previously worked as executive director of the N.C. Wine & Grape Council, representing the wine and grape industry in North Carolina. Margo is a native North Carolinian and has worked in state government for eight years. She lives in downtown Raleigh with her husband, Ken, their two dogs and seven chickens.

## Speaker Biographies continued



### **Jill Miller**

*Managing Director, Sundance Institute*

Jill Miller oversees the operational, financial, and administrative aspects of the nonprofit Sundance Institute. She is also responsible for the development of Utah-based community programming and securing state and local government funding. Jill is credited with securing a strategic long-term agreement with the Park City Municipal Corporation for the Sundance Film Festival. She oversees the Sundance Institute's Utah Advisory Board and serves as treasurer of Sundance Institute. Jill has served as chairwoman of the Utah Arts Council Board of Directors and the Board of the Park City Chamber/Bureau. She has also served on the boards of two humanitarian organizations, Ya't eeh Keshmish and the Ouelessebougou Alliance. Jill graduated with a B.A. in Political Science/International Relations from the University of Utah and holds an M.B.A. in International Business from The American University in Washington, D.C.



### **Kelly Miller**

*Executive Director, Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Kelly Miller has been the executive director of the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau for 12 years. During his tenure, hotel sales increased 65 percent since 1999. His team created a unique tourism product development fund, granting over \$14 million to nearly \$100 million to local capital projects. The CVB team was awarded the Southeast Tourism Society's CVB of the Year twice in the 2000s. *Frommer's Travel Guide* named Asheville one of the world's 12 must-see global destinations for 2007. *Fodor's Travel Guides* included Asheville in their recent "21 places we're going in 2011." Asheville was just named "Beer City USA" for the third straight year due to its world-class microbreweries. President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama stayed in Asheville for their 2010 spring holiday. Miller was appointed to the Asheville City Council in December 2008, completing his service in December 2009. He spent six years with the Atlanta CVB. Kelly grew up in Juneau, Alaska and was the first director of Centennial Hall Convention Center.



### **Marshall Moore**

*Director, Utah Film Commission*

Marshall D. Moore was appointed Director of the Utah Film Commission in 2007, after serving four years as a producer services executive. Marshall has worked for Warner Brothers, CBS Television, Leucadia Film Corp., ABC Television, HBO, M.G.M., Universal Television, and Showtime. Marshall first came to Utah 15 years ago as a location manager for the ABC miniseries *The Stand*, and continued his stay for the CBS television show *Touched by An Angel*. From 1986-1996 he worked on such films as *Defenseless*, *The Great Los Angeles Earthquake*, *Of Mice And Men*, *Just Like Dad*, *Wish Upon A Star*, and the television series *Everwood*. In his time with the Utah Film commission, he has worked to promote the State of Utah as a premier film destination with such films as *High School Musical*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and *127 Hours*.



### **Steve Moore**

*President and CEO, Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Steve Moore, the President and CEO of the Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau, has worked in the tourism and hospitality industry for 36 years. Moore came to the Greater Phoenix CVB in 2002 after serving 13 years as the Executive Director of the San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau. A native Texan, he also spent 14 years at the Houston CVB, where he served in various capacities, including Executive Vice President.



### **Teresa O'Neill**

*Director of International Sales & Marketing, Travel Oregon*

Teresa O'Neill has worked in the Oregon tourism industry since 1988. She worked in sales for The Hilton Portland until 1996, as director of sales for Kimpton Hotels through 2001, European sales manager for Travel Portland through 2005, and is currently employed as director of international sales and marketing for Travel Oregon. Teresa is passionate about her responsibilities for growing the international leisure market for Oregon and enjoys visiting all regions to enjoy hiking, biking, golf, skiing and relaxing in Oregon's truly unique environment.

## Speaker Biographies continued



### **Dennis Petroskey**

*Senior Vice President, Communications,  
U.S. Travel Association*

Dennis Petroskey oversees U.S. Travel's emergency preparedness activities and coordinates all industry communications for the organization's nearly 1,400

members, enabling them to stay informed on a host of policy issues, crisis response strategies and various other matters affecting the travel community. Since joining U.S. Travel in 2005, he has kept the industry informed as needed on emergency response developments and created well-received toolkits to help the industry minimize the impact of crises such as Hurricane Katrina, the bird and swine flu scares, and last year's BP oil spill. Dennis joined U.S. Travel after a communications career spent mostly in politics, government, and the entertainment industry. He has worked previously as a news reporter and a press secretary on Capitol Hill, and served as Vice President of Corporate Communications for the Fox media conglomerate and the music giant BMG Entertainment (now Sony/BMG Music).



### **Lalia Rach**

*Professor, NYU Tisch Center and  
Partner, Rach Enterprises*

Dr. Lalia Rach is a nationally recognized tourism educator. She holds a B.S. and M.B.A. from the University of Wisconsin and an Ed.D. from The

George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Lalia is also the founder of Rach Enterprises and is a trusted consultant, popular moderator and an internationally recognized speaker. She serves as an adviser to senior level executives at many of America's leading companies, with a focus on future trends, branding, and marketing strategies. Her clients include corporate, association and government leaders in the hospitality, tourism, sales and marketing, entertainment and sports industries.



### **Kurt Repanshek**

*Writer and Editor, [www.kjrwrites.com](http://www.kjrwrites.com)*

Kurt Repanshek built his journalism career atop a 14-year stint with The Associated Press that saw him rise from a general assignment reporter to correspondent-in-charge for the state of

Wyoming. Since embarking on a freelance career in the fall of 1993, his articles have appeared in *Smithsonian*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Sunset*, *Audubon*, *National Wildlife*, *Hemispheres*, *Wilderness*, and other publications. He launched *National Parks Traveler* in August 2005 because of his love, and concern, for national parks. Other credits include an article on national parks of the world for Microsoft's *Encarta* CD-Rom as well as three guidebooks to the national parks. His stories have appeared in the *Miami Herald*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Denver Post*, and other newspapers. During his AP career Kurt helped direct and contribute to AP coverage of the 1988 forest fires in and around Yellowstone National Park; covered statewide, congressional, and presidential campaigns, and; closely followed public lands issues in the Rocky Mountain West.



### **Sharon Rossi**

*Vice President of Advertising,  
Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing  
Corporation (GPTMC)*

Sharon Rossi, vice president of advertising at the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation (GPTMC), oversees regional and national advertising campaigns; the GPTMC cooperative advertising program; the AAA market; and regional, state and national tourism relationships. Rossi began her career in tourism marketing and sales at Peddler's Village in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where she worked for 13 years prior to joining GPTMC. She was responsible for the marketing of 75 shops, restaurants, meeting facilities, inns and events. Rossi is the outgoing chairperson of the U.S. Travel Association's National Council of Destination Organizations, sits on the Association's executive committee and board of directors, and serves on the Discover America Advisory Council. She also sits on the board of the Philadelphia Ad Club, the Pennsylvania Tourism and Lodging Association, where she serves as director, the advisory council for the Pennsylvania Convention and Visitors Bureau Association, and on many other committees and advisory boards in the region.

## Speaker Biographies continued



### **Kelly Schulz**

*Vice President, Communications & Public Relations, New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau*

A New Orleans native, Kelly returned to her hometown in 2006 to join the CVB team, under the direction of Stephen Perry, which was rebuilding New Orleans' \$5 billion tourism industry in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. As a spokesperson for New Orleans, Kelly has been interviewed by CNN, the *New York Times*, MSNBC and *USA Today* in order to dispel myths and overcome customer misperceptions about the city's recovery. Her team has managed media relations for the five anniversaries of Hurricane Katrina as well as the BP oil spill. The New Orleans CVB has received 16 awards for national best practices in crisis management from the Public Relations Society of America and other organizations. In 2010, Schulz was named one of HSMAI's "Top 25" in Sales and Marketing.



### **Lee Sentell**

*Director, Alabama Tourism Department*

Lee Sentell has served as director of the Alabama Tourism Department since 2003 and was recently reappointed by Gov. Robert Bentley to a third term. The agency has received a number of national marketing awards, most notably for its "year of" campaigns that have highlighted food, the arts, sports, music, outdoors and small towns. The state's industry grew by 46 percent during the first five years of his tenure. He is past chair of Travel South USA, the organization of Southern state tour and travel departments. A former journalist and editor, he has responded to media queries on a variety of challenges to the tourism industry in recent years, including hurricanes, the BP oil spill and this spring's record tornadoes. He is author of a guidebook, *The Best of Alabama*.



### **Mo Sherifdeen**

*Interactive Marketing Manager, Travel Oregon*

Mo oversees digital brand strategy for Travel Oregon (Oregon's official tourism marketing agency) and is constantly dreaming up new ways to tell the Oregon story in the interactive medium. In his current role, he serves as the managing editor of content for [TravelOregon.com](http://TravelOregon.com) and is responsible for the day-to-day execution of digital programs including e-mail, SEO/SEM, & social media. Mo is a graduate of the University of Arizona and spends his spare time watching indie movies, wine wandering, and exploring the Oregon outdoors with his family.



### **Gary Sherwin**

*President and CEO, Visit Newport Beach, Inc.*

A 25-year hospitality industry veteran, Gary C. Sherwin, CDME, APR has served as President & CEO of Visit Newport Beach Inc since 2006. He previously served in senior destination marketing roles in Palm Springs, Long Beach, CA, Fort Worth and Los Angeles. Sherwin is the Past Chairman of the Board of the California Travel Association and is Vice Chairman of the Orange County Tourism Council. Sherwin is a nationally recognized leader in community brand development and co-authored the international best selling book *Destination BrandScience™*. For the last six years, he also has been an adjunct faculty member at California State University, Fullerton. Sherwin holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and Political Science from California State University, Fullerton and was named to the Department of Communications Wall of Fame and one of the university's "Visions and Visionaries" in 2011. He is accredited by the Public Relations Society of America (APR) and also received his CDME credential from the DMAI where he also serves on its board of directors.



### **Matt Sims**

*Director of Development, Authentic Entertainment, Inc.*

Matt is Director of Development at Authentic Entertainment, Inc. Prior his role in development, Matt worked as a Producer, Director, Story Editor, and Writer for numerous network and cable series. Matt's credits include *Big Brother* (CBS), *Hell's Kitchen* (FOX), and *Toddlers and Tiaras* (TLC) in addition to many others. In his current position, Matt has developed numerous series for multiple networks, and has sold shows to such networks as TLC and Discovery. He is involved in all steps of the development process: casting, production of sales tapes, editing, and pitching shows to networks. Matt attended Texas A&M University and graduated Cum Laude with a degree in Accounting and Finance.

## Speaker Biographies continued



### **Scott Stratten**

*President, UnMarketing*

Formerly a national sales training manager and a Professor at the Sheridan College School of Business, Scott Stratten has been running his “UnAgency” for 8 years, which has become the place companies like

PepsiCo, Red Cross and Fidelity Investments come to when they need help guiding their way through the viral/social media and relationship marketing landscape. He now has more than 76,000 people follow his daily rantings on Twitter and was voted one of the top influencers on the site with more than 200 million users. It’s the only time he’s felt comfortable being compared to Ashton Kutcher, P Diddy and Justin Bieber. His book, *UnMarketing: Stop Marketing. Start Engaging.*, became a national best-seller before it was released and was also just named one of the top business books of the year by 1-800-CEO READ.



### **Tamra Talmadge-Anderson**

*Director of Public Relations,  
Virginia Tourism Corporation*

As the Director of Public Relations for the Virginia Tourism Corporation, Tamra Talmadge-Anderson is on the leadership team for the award-winning Virginia is for

Lovers campaign, generating nearly \$10 million in earned media annually. Tamra served as the lead communications staffer for the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, II to Virginia in 2007. She and her staff were honored to receive the U.S. Travel Mercury Award for Niche Marketing for Vintage Tweets, a creative social media campaign to promote October Virginia Wine Month. Tamra graduated from Michigan State University with a B.A. and earned her Master of Public Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University. She and her husband live in Richmond, Virginia.



### **Leigh von der Esch**

*Managing Director,  
Utah Office of Tourism*

Leigh von der Esch was named managing director of the Utah Office of Tourism in May of 2005. Prior to that appointment, Leigh was the State Film Commissioner

from 1985 to 2005. As President of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) from 1990 to 1996, Leigh spoke of the State’s film industry and AFCI in countries around the world on the economic and tourism benefits of movies shooting on location. As managing director of the Utah Office of Tourism, Leigh is a member of U.S. Travel Association and is a member of the National Council of State Tourism Directors and board of director’s member, as well as a member of the Western States Tourism Policy Council. She has been honored by Utah Business Magazine on several occasions in Utah. Leigh is a graduate of the University of Utah with honors, with a bachelor’s degree in political science.



### **Kevin Wright**

*Director, Domestic Consumer  
Marketing, Travel Oregon*

As Director of Consumer Marketing for Travel Oregon, Wright leads the agency’s domestic consumer marketing and communications programs. He supervises

Travel Oregon’s advertising campaigns, publications, media relations, website and interactive programs, special promotions and projects, and fulfillment. Kevin joined Travel Oregon in 2005 as Manager of International and Domestic Travel Trade Marketing. Before moving to Oregon, Kevin’s career included ten years of marketing experience in the Colorado ski industry where he also served as Marketing Specialist for the Colorado Tourism Office and the Colorado Film Commission. He is a 1995 graduate of Plymouth State College, New Hampshire, with a bachelor’s degree in Marketing.



### **Berkeley W. Young**

*President, Young Strategies, Inc.*

Berkeley Young specializes in destination research, planning, and strategy. Berkeley’s travel industry experience includes management positions at a destination marketing organization, a Chamber of

Commerce, a golf resort, and a research and planning firm. In 2004 Berkeley formed his Charlotte, NC based company focusing on research and strategic planning for all aspects of travel destinations. Berkeley’s firm is known for its custom tailored approach in using research to address specific issues for DMOs. In the last ten years Berkeley has worked with over 100 destinations in twenty-six states and is a popular speaker at regional and national conferences and conventions.



### **George Zimmermann**

*Vice President, Travel Michigan*

George Zimmermann became Travel Michigan’s Vice President in October 2001. He brought with him a wealth of tourism, technology, marketing and media experience. During his tenure at the MEDC,

Travel Michigan created and launched the award-winning Pure Michigan branding campaign, and michigan.org has become America’s most popular state tourism website. Prior to joining Travel Michigan, George served as Ohio’s Tourism Director. He was named “State Tourism Director of the Year” in 1997 by the National Council of State Tourism Directors. Before his work in tourism, George spent more than a decade in all phases of broadcasting in Texas, California, and Ohio, including serving as the Statehouse Bureau Chief for the Ohio Public Radio/Public Television Statehouse Bureau in Columbus. He is the author of three travel-related books and a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin.