



President's Holiday Newsletter December 2017

Dear LABTA Member,

With holiday festivities and a new year upon us, I'd like to take a moment to thank you for being a valued LABTA member in 2017 and provide you with an update on what's coming in 2018.

Your Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and I are committed to driving even higher value to all LABTA members and stakeholders throughout the upcoming year – a promise that we ask all members to get actively involved in and to hold us to account for.

The very first step in this direction was for me to build a Board of Directors that I knew had the skill and the will to build upon our strengths but also tackle our areas for improvement with a new lens. I could not be more grateful nor proud of the A-Team that has already accomplished so much since I took the reins from Craig at our September meeting. If you haven't met the 2018 Board yet, take a moment to get to know them and volunteer to become part of a Committee. As a non-profit, all-volunteer organization, there is a spot for everyone and the value we drive from here will ultimately be the result of everyone doing their part.

Once assembled, our Board reviewed the qualitative and quantitative results of the membership survey sent in October where we had 50% membership participation (amazing!) during our Board Retreat in November in order to create our 2018 action plans accordingly. Short after that, in December, every single one of our Board Directors reached to their assigned list within the LABTA community to request a donation for our largest annual fundraiser during the Holiday Gala on December 13th. It takes time and money to make things better, and I'm incredible enthusiastic to report that we received a grand total of 73 donations and raised almost \$30,000 between the silent and live auctions – an 81% increase compared to last year! Thank you to everyone who made this evening possible: the Board for making the calls, everyone who attended (up 60%+ year-over-year), sponsor Star Alliance, all donors and bidders, with a special shout-out to Martha Sullivan from LE Hotels and Amber Ardizone from EMA who put this spectacular and successful evening together as well as to Sam Barrett from Balboa Travel for taking home MC of the year!

Things to look out for in 2018:

- **A content-rich calendar of events that is announced early and that takes place in attractive, diverse venues.** We have the incredible fortune to have Sophie Mokhtari from Riot Games leading the charge for Programs and Karen Aslanyan from SLS Hotel / Luxury Collection doing the same for Venues. We're all set for January, February, March, and are in really good shape for April and May. Check out the calendar on <http://www.labta.org/calendarM.php> for more info.
- **A mix of existing and new meeting formats.** Just a few examples:
 - o Travel Tech Takeoff (our own version of "shark-tank") taking place on March 21st at Riot Games' E-Sports Theater in West LA. Jake Farmakis from Rocketrip, our Director for the newly created Travel Tech Advisory is spearheading this one and I can say one thing – get your tickets now because the theater only has 108 spots and they will sell!
 - o Combined Travel Manager Exchange Forum and regular meeting during lunch on April 11th. This initiative voted on unanimously during the Retreat came from Neda Nadem from Boeing, our led for Direct Member Relations, and is based in delivering better value to all vs. a limited numbers of members.
 - o Education Day at the new brand-new Banc of California soccer stadium on May 10th (note the new date!), led for the second year in a row by the lovely Tana Rivas from AKA. We are going to offer new session format and sponsorship opportunities. Watch this space!
- **An environment where existing members feel valued and new/potential members welcome.** Sam Barrett is on the Board for the 3rd year now and is taking on Membership. Jody Flowers from the Flower Group as Supplier Member Relations has already created a committee to make this happen at and in between meetings.
- **Increasing our presence and communication on social media.** This is Erin Jurevicius from Bridgestreet Hospitality's gig. After creating our very-first LABTA company page back in November, Erin's already gotten 24 updates out and 122 followers! If you aren't following us yet, please do so now. We're also going to revamp the website look and feel – yes, it's beyond overdue!
- **Making our voice as the business travel industry in and beyond the greater LA area LOUDER.** Michael Burny from United Airlines already has the largest Committee built within the Board as part of his Government Relations Directorship and will be sure to represent our needs in among other places DC throughout the year. We need it!
- **A well-surrounded President.** Jokes aside, I'm very lucky to have an incredibly skilled, diverse, and fun Executive Committee around me this year: Kathy Briski from Boeing (President-Elect), Maureen "Mo" Ashley from Music Express (Vice-President), Janine Nichols (Executive Director), Kjarsten Philipsen from BCD Travel (Treasurer), and Matt Riddle from EHI Holdings (Secretary). We will also be wisely advised by our Board Advisors: Gail Sherman from Adelman Travel and Lenard Dobrowolski from Hilton Hotels.

This was longer than I initially planned so I'm going to leave it with wishing each of you the very best of health, happiness, and success in 2018!

Chris

