



# HOTEL MANAGEMENT

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## 2018 INFLUENTIAL WOMEN IN HOSPITALITY



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**COLLEEN KEATING**, COO, AMERICAS, IHG

A onetime franchise operator of Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn Express hotels, Colleen Keating now holds operations responsibility for those brands and others within IHG's Americas region, where she also serves as a member of the regional leadership team. Her journey has included stints with Omni Hotels & Resorts and the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, 17 years with Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide and, most recently, serving as EVP of operations for Davidson Hotels & Resorts. Keating has any number of targets on her radar. "Broadly, we must continue to elevate the performance of IHG hotels. Specifically, we're focused on a successful launch of Avid hotels, new design roll-outs across Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express hotels, multiyear initiatives to drive performance of our Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts, and the continued momentum of our extended-stay brands. At the same time, we will continue to drive the growth of our lifestyle and luxury portfolio," she said. Such an agenda can push work/life balance boundaries, but Keating keeps it all in check. "I work diligently to manage my energy, organize and prioritize. It's also critically important to have the right supporting team both at work and at home. I've always been thoughtful about managing my career in a 24/7 business and being present for my family," she said. The same goes for her work family. "I've been spending as much time as possible connecting with colleagues... to learn what support, tools and empowerment they need to deliver against our ambitious goals."



**LARA LATTURE**, PRESIDENT, NORTHWEST X SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

After learning about sales in a department store, Lara Latture decided that hospitality would be a better fit instead. "I knew a lot of people in the business and I went out to apply for a [sales] job with Hilton for a hotel that they owned and operated," she said. From there, she worked her way up to GM before she turned 30, then director of operations and, most recently, COO and EVP of The Hotel Group. Her biggest challenge in those early years, she recalled, was convincing people that she was serious about making hospitality her career. "When we look very different from all the guys in black suits and blue ties, there is a stereotype there that we have to kind of just decide that we're going to bust through. And that sounds like kind of a strange thing, but I think it's real. I just don't think most people talk about it." After nearly 20 years at The Hotel Group, Latture moved on to found Northwest x Southern Hospitality at the start of 2018 and serves as the company's president. The most important skill a leader possesses, she believes, is a willingness to listen and learn. "I had to learn the hard way and back myself up, whether it was learning detailed accounting skills or understanding what revenue management in a hotel meant or understanding what yield meant. If you're smart and you're really lucky, you surround yourself with people that know so much more than you do and you try and take a little bit from everybody."



**AMANDA MARCELLO**, SVP OF BRAND STRATEGY, RLH CORPORATION

Amanda Marcello has always unconsciously pursued a career in hospitality. While earning her business degree at Johnson & Wales University, Marcello took several hospitality courses, and her affinity for the industry eventually led her to join JPG Restaurant Group and hospitality consulting agency AF&Co before transitioning into her current role as SVP of brand strategy at RLH Corporation. She said that the hotel industry is attractive because it allows business owners to curate an entire experience from the ground up, but she also admitted that the industry can be challenging to keep up with for newcomers. She lists communication skills and a desire to take action as the most important character traits for success in hospitality, but also said industry leadership is important for fostering future talent in the industry. She challenged leaders to get to know their employees on an individual basis to the best of their ability because there may be some unassuming diamonds in the rough waiting to be discovered. "It starts at the top," she said. "Not everyone has an outgoing, assertive personality. Sometimes there are some more introverted geniuses among us." For rising hospitality professionals, women or otherwise, Marcello said it's important to speak your mind and make your growth goals known throughout the company. "If you are the only person thinking about where you want to be in 10 years, that's not good," she said. "Speak up."



**MICHELLE MASTERS**, REGIONAL VP OF FRANCHISE OPERATIONS, RADISSON HOTEL GROUP

As regional VP of franchise operations for Radisson Hotel Group (formerly the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group), Michelle Masters is responsible for achieving hotel revenue growth goals and corporate, guest, franchisee and employee satisfaction goals. Masters credits much of her rise through the ranks to Radisson's culture, especially the leadership of Marilyn Carlson Nelson, co-owner of Carlson and the company's former chairwoman and CEO. "She really set that platform for women to be very successful with her initiatives and her drive to create great women in business and leaders." Another mentor within the company is former Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group executive Nancy Johnson, who Masters credits with giving her the "confidence and the drive" to go farther in business. As someone who was mentored by strong women, she now tries to mentor the next generation and get them as excited about the industry as she is. Leadership, said Masters, is about being inspirational. "It's finding the right people that have passions and you find the skill sets that you can develop with those people," she said. "A big part of it is finding those right people and developing and getting into what makes them thrive, and then helping them achieve their goals." A good leader, she said, provides great direction that the team buys into and encourages collaboration and open communication among the whole team.



**VANESSA OGLE**

CEO AND FOUNDER,  
ENSEO

In 2000, Vanessa Ogle, who has a degree in international business and marketing, founded Enseo, a technology-based services provider for hospitality, education, hospitals and government installations. As a minority woman business owner with 26 years of operational experience in technology companies, she has secured more than 30 patents from the United States Patent and Trademark Office. The intensity of Ogle's team has allowed her to gauge the company's success. "They are truly passionate about what we do and how we serve each other and our customers," she said. "They cheer the wins and truly get frustrated when things don't go the way we think they should. Our customers keep coming back for more." Ogle has faced challenges along the way. "I am consistently challenged when I believe the best product and service should win the day. There is a special kind of friction when a woman tells a group of men in technology that there is a better way," she said. Ogle's current mission for Enseo is to equip classrooms around the country with the same technology the company uses to protect hotel housekeepers.