

People-in-Travel

Tracking Travel's Leaders

2012 Review Moves

• **Raimund Hosch**, CEO of Messe Berlin, is due to retire this June, handing over to **Christian Goeke**. In the travel business, MB is better known as the owner/operator of ITB travel trade events in Berlin and Singapore.

• We were prescient in our report on the occasion of **Hans Lerch** moving from Kuoni (after 2/3 years) to Hotelplan, both Switzerland-based tour operators. That is what he did.

• The Rezidor Hotel Group gets a new president and CEO, **Wolfgang Neumann** this month. He takes over from Kurt Ritter – who has held the job at Rezidor and its predecessors for 23 of the 30 years he has worked there.

• Air Asia promoted **Aireen Omar** to CEO of AA Malaysia. Her background is entirely financial. She took over from Tony Fernandes, who performed the role in his job as CEO of the AA group. Fernandes now concentrates on expansion of the whole AA group.

• New head of Carlson is **Trudy Rautio**, president and CEO. US-based Carlson is primarily a hotel company (main brands Park and Radisson) and Carlson Wagonlit, a travel agency group mainly for corporate travel.

Rautio's appointment was quick, in the same month as Hubert Joly announced his surprise departure, following a relatively-short four years in the job.

• **Steve Ridgway**, who has been running Virgin Atlantic for 14 years, is due to leave this spring 2013.

Words

(May be paraphrased)

• **Rolf Freitag**, IPK. [Alan] Greenspan [who ran the US central bank 1987-2006] caused the financial crisis. They are all crooks. California, Illinois, Greece and Ireland are bankrupt. Capitalism is fighting for survival.

• **Michael Frenzel**, (then) TUI. The Arab countries should concentrate on Europe as source business. You cannot



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overcome the problems with a media campaign. So the political stability is the most important. It is not a question of marketing. Tunisia is getting there. I think there are opportunities to get together, such as museums in Greece and Egypt.

• **Hubert Joly**, (then) Carlson Hotels. *Why sell the small-exclusive brand Regent to start/develop the small-exclusive brand Missoni?*

I pushed the sale of Regent, partly because the Regent Berlin lease was costing us so much. And we had a keen buyer. Regent was a problem because it was big enough to require attention. Missoni is different, and does not cost much. There will only be a handful, and particularly in the Middle East.

• **Steve Joyce**, Choice Hotels. In US not much new construction, so good. Results are getting back to near 2007 levels. Seems likely to be three years of good growth. Conversion business in Europe is a huge opportunity.

• **Taleb Rifai**, World Tourism Organization. Taxes are a fact of life. We have to accept some, and just tackle those that are not very good. *Who decides what is a 'good' and a 'bad' tax?*

• **Alan Root**, wildlife film-maker. Price will be the only way to make sure gameparks are not spoiled. I think the way is private ownership of parks, because public parks just don't get it.

• **David Scowsill**, head of World Travel & Tourism Council. *Why are you getting close to WTO? If WTO is not a rival, then surely WTTC activities should be a part of WTO activities, or vice versa?*

[WTO] is government supported, and we are private sector. So there is

no question of one being a subsidiary of the other. Our common mission is educating governments.

• **Richard Solomons**, InterContinental Hotels. 2012 is going ok. We have seen a good spread of growth. We own only 11 hotels now. As brand manager we are doing well; not so good for owners. Europe is only 15% of our profits.

• **Marthinus van Schalkwyk**, South African minister of tourism. There are too many associations in travel; there should be just one.

• **Frits van Paasschen**, Starwood Hotels.

At one stage we had to get over that we were not an American company with outposts. So we don't talk of domestic and international.

On his appointment to Starwood in 2007, FVP talked of "looking forward to going East" – but he did not mean Japan, but New York! We noted that he had not yet "grasped that a good share of Starwood's business assets (hotels and guests) are outside the US".

• **Willie Walsh**, IAG, holding company for British Airways and Iberia. *Is BA's subsidiary airline Open Skies a failure?*

It has been very useful in terms of what we have learned.

• **Philip Wolf**, (then) PhoCusWright. Fcommerce (Facebook commerce) will be the next important business segment.

Awards

We don't do annual awards. Partly because few companies accord them much value (despite paradoxically, at the same time as lauding themselves for the awards they have won).

In 2007, our award – for Travel Man of the Year – went to the then head of IATA (International Air Transport Association), **Giovanni Bisignani**.

In 2012, our new award was much simpler – Happiest CEO Of The Year. We were partly inspired by the winner – **Paul Kerr**, head of UK-based Small Luxury Hotels of the World – to actually create such an award.

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For more information, contact Raymonde Perpignani at Travel Business Analyst, TBAoffice@gmail.com

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