

## **TRAVEL RECOVERY** TO PICK UP SPEED IN Q3 **ABC-CCRA WELCOMES V PARINE** COVID-19 DECONNIELE 20m CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 ACCINE **MEETING & EVENTS** COVID-19 **ON THE HORIZON HOTELS ADD COVID-19TESTING**





### LONGTIME ABC LEADER **KLAYTON KILLION** ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT



Klayton Killion Executive Vice-President, Hotel Relations ABC Global Services

layton Killion, who has given his talents to ABC Global Services for more than a quarter of a century, will retire at the beginning of April.

Killion leaves a lasting impact on ABC Global Services, having served in nearly all areas of the organization since joining the company from Marriott International 26 years ago. He has built and fostered deep, lasting relationships with ABC's hotel partners as executive vice president of hotel and supplier relations. Over the past several weeks, he has been working alongside Dee Runyan, who is succeeding him in his role, to ensure a smooth transition before his official retirement.

He will be enjoying his retirement by traveling and working around the house with his husband of 36 years, Robert.

"For the last 26 years, Klayton has been the heart and soul of ABC, ensuring that we were delivering value to agencies, TMCs and corporate users of our Premier Global Hotel Program," ABC Global Services Chief Executive Officer Eric J. Altschul said. "Words cannot fully express how I feel about Klayton personally and the gratitude I have for being fortunate enough to have worked closely with him over the last eight years."

"I have been very fortunate to be part of the ABC team for the last 26+ years. The entire ABC family is comprised of true professionals with a passion for hospitality, marketing, and excellent service. I will always value the friendships made with our amazing group of hoteliers and agency partners. ABC has a storied history and under Eric's leadership an incredible future", said Klayton Killion.

#### ABC GLOBAL SERVICES WELCOMES **DEE RUNYAN** TO LEADERSHIP TEAM

ravel industry leader Dee Runyan has joined ABC Global Services as Executive Vice President of Hotel Relations.

In her role, Runyan is responsible for maintaining, strengthening and growing ABC's strong partnerships with more than 50,000 hotel partners around the world. She has a long history of leadership roles across the travel industry, specializing in distribution technology, travel management company operations and client and supplier relations. Those roles include Chief Operating Officer of CorpTray, President of World Travel Inc., Executive Vice President of the Americas region for Radius and 17 years as Executive Vice President at BCD Travel.

"Dee's expertise in supplier relations, travel technology, operations, consortia, TMCs and corporate travel is second to none, and I have little doubt that she will be able to enhance every area of our organization," ABC Global Services Chief Executive Officer Eric J. Altschul said. "She is uniquely qualified for this role and will fit in well with our core values of strong supplier partnerships, operating ethically and honestly and treating one another with kindness."

"I am very excited to be joining ABC Global Services at such a transformational time in our industry," Runyan said. "Hotels and travel professionals will be critical partners as our industry rebuilds from the most challenging year we've ever seen, and no company is better positioned than ABC Global Services to facilitate strong, mutually beneficial partnerships on both sides."

Dee can be reached at (561) 396-9984 or by email at drunyan@abcglobalservices.com.



Dee Runyan Executive Vice-President, Hotel Relations ABC Global Services



## ANALYSTS EXPECT RECOVERY TO PICK UP SPEED IN Q3

ith the worst year the hotel industry has ever experienced in the rearview mirror, all eyes now are on a recovery in 2021, which analysts say is coming—albeit slowly, and in phases.

First, the bad news: The first half of this year will continue to be difficult for the global travel industry. STR and Tourism Economics in recent weeks updated their U.S. hotel industry forecast to reflect a more pessimistic view, reflecting sluggish demand at the end of last year. The organizations forecast that average daily hotel rates (ADR) in the U.S. this year will recover to 82 percent of where they were in 2019, and they expect revenue per available room will be 61 percent of 2019 levels.

In its State of the Hotel Industry 2021 report published in January, the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) forecasts that U.S. hotel occupancy in 2021

GBTA projects 2021 business travel volume to be up 21 percent over 2020

Source: GBTA Annual Business Travel Index

will average 52 percent. That's better than the 2020 occupancy level of 44 percent, but still well below the rate of 66 percent seen in 2019.

So far this year, leisure travel continues to drive the industry's recovery globally, with business travel all but stopped across many companies with the exception of a few regions, such as domestic business travel in China. The AHLA's report said business travel in the United States likely will remain down 85 percent compared with 2019 levels through April 2021, at which point it will begin a slow recovery.

Assuming vaccine distribution stays on pace, essential meetings, and small and medium-sized events, as well as regional international travel, could start up again beginning in the second quarter of 2021. Group travel could start returning at a stronger pace in the third quarter.

"Client-facing and other sales-driving meetings will likely be the first business travel to return as in-person meetings with customers are a critical element of the industry," according to the AHLA report. "Industry conferences, trade shows, and other high-volume events will likely be the last to return, pending an end to restrictions on gathering sizes, as well as some degree of economic recovery. However, there will likely be pent-up demand to return to conferences once it is safe to do so."

By the last quarter of 2021, group demand could be just 23 percent below levels seen in 2019, the report indicated.

In its annual Business Travel Index, the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) projected that 2021 business travel volumes would be up 21 percent over 2020. That would be followed by year-over-year growth of 38 percent in 2022.

The good news is that pent-up demand remains strong across all segments. An AHLA poll of 2,200 adults early this year showed that 56 percent said they planned to travel for leisure this year, which is about

## 56 percent of adults polled, plan to travel for leisure this year



Source: AHLA poll of 2,200 adults

the same amount as a typical year. A recent article in Hotel Business noted that resort hotels have been a standout in the industry even amid the pandemic. CRBE Hotels' Americas Research senior economist Bram Gallagher noted that the resort segment's ADR improved year-over-year in November 2020.

By 2022, U.S. hotel occupancy should recover to 61.4 percent, and the total number of rooms sold should get close to prepandemic levels, according to the AHLA report. Business travel spending, however, will not surpass the peak level reached in 2019 until 2025, according to the GBTA report.

"The pandemic has been devastating for business travel, and it's clear our industry will take some time to recover given the challenges we're facing on multiple fronts," GBTA interim executive director Dave Hilfman said in a statement. "Economic recovery is already underway, although very uneven across countries and sectors."

## WELCOME **HVN – HAVENS** DISCOVER A NEW CATEGORY OF STAY

BC Global Services is pleased to announce a strategic partnership with HVN, a leading B2B booking platform, connecting ABC and CCRA's travel agency partners worldwide to HVN's collection of professionally managed private residences, villas, homes, and other one-of-a-kind accommodations.

The new relationship will enable ABC and CCRA agencies to access a marketplace of more than 200,000 properties and accommodations in addition to the 50,000+ hotels available through the ABC/CCRA Premier Global Hotel Program bookable in the GDS and online booking tools. HVN's expertly curated collection of properties features unique rental accommodations suitable for both business and leisure travel, including vacation rentals, serviced apartments, private homes, villas, condo residences, cabins, private ranches, ski chalets and overwater bungalows. Unlike other accommodation rental platforms, 100 percent of HVN's properties are professionally managed, not

only ensuring consistent, high-quality stays but also compliance to strict, cleanliness requirements, an essential feature in the time of COVID-19.

ABC's agency partners can access this content through a dedicated website, where they can sign up, easily search, and book

inventory, and earn flexible commissions on each transaction. Agencies also have access to a sophisticated reporting portal where they can track all their agent and traveler activity, commission payments and more. For information contact bizdev@ABCGlobalServices.com



### ABC WELCOMES ITP – INDEPENDENT TRAVEL PARTNERSHIP

BC has established a new strategic partnership with ITP - International Travel Partnership, a global network of over 60 independent TMCs, bringing over 35 years of experience to supporting the needs and complexities of global, corporate account servicing/support.

What can ITP do for your Agency?

- When corporate travel returns and pressures increase to manage T & E budgets even more judiciously than before Covid, your corporate accounts will assess the savings that global account servicing may bring. Typically, only the mega-agencies had the global networks and expertise to support this need. With ITP, you have a <u>very affordable</u> solution to offer your existing accounts and prospects, giving you a <u>new competitive advantage</u>.
- ITP is differentiated from mega-agency networks with partners that are *locally owned/managed* and leaders in their respective markets. This is important because there are so many unique country/regional dynamics and supplier opportunities that local travel companies benefit from.
- The ITP network leverages the most <u>advanced technology</u> <u>platform</u> for communications, traveller servicing support

and data consolidation, with highly technical personnel supporting all the configuration details.

- There are *flexible participation models* to choose from based on your agencies/corporate account needs and the level of investment that makes sense.
- Allows you to <u>elevate your agency profile as a truly global</u> <u>player</u>, differentiating yourself from your peers, ensuring account retention and creating new business opportunities with accounts previously out of reach.

To learn more, contact our Business Development team at bizdev@ABCGlobalServices.com





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INTERCONTINENTAL® SYDNEY



The latest forecasts indicate rebound for corporate meetings and events is at least now on the horizon. While emerging variants of Covid-19 make it harder to guess what will happen, vaccine rollouts around the world have inspired a new round of optimism. A recent Global Business Travel Association poll of 779 members around the world found that 80 percent said they would feel comfortable traveling for business once they are vaccinated.

Even so, what will the meeting industry look like as businesses face a global patchwork of regulations and infection rates and a workforce that has become accustomed to a year of working from home and using virtual platforms?

ABC recently spoke with two leading executives of Etherio Group's meeting



Steve Goodman, Managing Partner MeetingAdvice An Etherio company

and events companies, Steve Goodman, managing partner of MeetingAdvice and Eli Sananes, president of Global Meetings & Incentives recently who shared their own predictions for the upcoming recovery.

Q: What will group and meeting demand look like in the second half of the year, particularly as we continue to get advice about what activities are safe for fully vaccinated individuals?

**Eli Sananes:** We anticipate an increase in the size and number of live meetings managed during the second half of 2021, in particular in the fourth quarter. We also believe association meetings will lead the recovery, although association and corporate meetings will continue offering attendees a hybrid option for the foreseeable future. Corporate meetings will be slower to recover as companies continue to assess the risk versus the reward of hosting in-person gatherings. We project corporate meetings will resume to pre-Covid activity sometime during the first half of 2022.

### Q: What will event organizers do to entice attendees to get back on the road?

**Steve Goodman:** Initially, I believe that if people feel they're in a safe environment and proper Covid-19 protocols are being followed, people will feel comfortable meeting in person in the very near future. There's no question that content and the method of delivery of that content will be more relevant than ever before in order to justify the ROI on meetings moving forward.

Q: What will meetings and events look like in the early days of the recovery? Sananes: The in-person meetings that

**Sananes:** The in-person meetings that GMI is managing are operating on a local or

regional level, ranging in size between 10 and 50 attendees. All our live meetings include an option to attend virtually for attendees not yet comfortable traveling or being in a group setting. As a larger percentage of the population is vaccinated, we believe meeting currently taking place at a district or regional level will operate as a national program by the fourth quarter of this year or the first quarter of 2022.

#### Q: Will there be long-term effects beyond the recovery, particularly with those hybrid options?

**Goodman:** As a result of Covid-19 and most meetings becoming virtual, it is our belief that certain meetings will stay as a virtual meeting while others will take on a hybrid look and feel as we move into 2022 beyond.



Eli Sananes, President Global Meetings & Incentives An Etherio company

## HOTELS ADD ON-SITE COVID-19 TESTING TO PROVIDE CONVENIENCE, PEACE OF MIND

In January 2021, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced new requirements for travelers arriving into the United States on international flights. These restrictions require them to show proof of a negative Covid-19 test taken within three days prior to boarding their flight Nearly immediately, the travel industry began to feel the impact of this requirement, particularly in leisure travel destinations such as the Caribbean and Mexico.

United Airlines, for example, noticed a decline in bookings and cancellations to Mexican resort destinations. "Mexico had no restrictions prior to these changes," United chief commercial officer Andrew Nocella said in the carrier's earnings call in late January. "So, the impact on those Mexican destinations is just more than other places that already had significant testing requirements."

Just as airlines have been facilitating Covid-19 testing for many passengers to work with the various requirements around the world, several hotel companies also are stepping up to provide testing, ensuring their guests can safely stick to their travel plans.

Hyatt Hotels Corp., for example, in late January announced that all 19 of its Hyatt resorts in Mexico, Costa Rica, the Caribbean and South America would be



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offering complimentary Covid-19 testing through May 31 for its guests traveling to the United States. The offer is for up to two registered guests per guestroom per stay. and a minimum length of stay that varies by property applies. In addition, most of those 19 hotels also are offering a special "Travel Delay Rate" for guests who test positive and are unable to board their return flight. That rate gives them between 25 percent and 50 percent off standard rates as well as a 30 percent discount on food and beverage, excluding alcohol, for up to 14 nights. The hotels also will work with local health authorities to help guests self-isolate either on the property or in local quarantine centers.

Marriott International properties across the Caribbean and Latin America are also prepared to ensure their guests have access to testing. In some cases, this involves helping to make an appointment and providing transportation, but several properties also are providing complimentary on-site testing. A full list of participating hotels is available on Marriott's website.

Some Caribbean resort properties have made testing a requirement. The Grand Hyatt Baha Mar in Nassau, the Bahamas, for example, has introduced Covid-19 rapid tests upon arrival, after which they are taken to their guestrooms to await the results. Upon a negative result, they are given a wristband that lets the move freely about the resort. Accor announced it has partnered with digital healthcare technology company X.labs to roll out Covid-19 testing at all its managed hotels across the U.S. and Canada.

'It's not just resort destination hotels, nor just hotels in North America implementing Covid-19 testing programs. Hotels in Europe are also making it available. Accor's Sofitel properties at both London Heathrow and London Gatwick airports, for example, are offering "Test and Rest" packages in which travelers get self-administered Covid-19 tests and a room in which they can await results.

Hilton Worldwide recently announced EventReady, providing access to thirdparty Covid-19 testing and health screening providers to meeting planners who book an event at any Hilton property in the US.

As testing and quarantine requirements change constantly in destinations around the world in the next few months, expect to see more testing programs introduced throughout the hotel industry.



## NEW TO THE ABC FAMILY CCRA 24/7 CALL CENTER SOLUTIONS AFTER-HOURS TRAVELERS ASSISTANCE FOR TRAVEL AGENCIES

BC Global Services last year acquired the assets of CCRA, which included the premier provider of after-hours services for agencies and corporate travel departments. Jerry Paquette, VP of CCRA's Call Center Solutions, recently spoke with us to explain how agencies can benefit from after-hours services, particularly with the current challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. An edited transcript of the interview follows.

## ABC: What have been the primary needs of your clients since the pandemic began?

**Jerry Paquette:** The primary need from our partners is helping them reduce their costs while continuing continuity of service. To



Jerry Paquette Vice President, CCRA 24/7 Call Center Solutions

day, clients might have one person working so they would have their calls set to overflow to CCRA for assistance. This allows clients to pay for transactions being processed and avoid paying hourly wages for employees who might be handling a few calls a day. Although this is something we prefer not to have happen, it has been an opportunity for CCRA to support our clients and help them stay open.

### ABC: Did you introduce any new services?

**Paquette:** We did offer a couple of new service to assist our clients. One service is assisting our clients in utilizing travelers unused tickets for new bookings. During normal times, before Covid, CCRA did not work with unused tickets. This was due to the time involved with searching

for unused tickets and determining if they would be applicable towards a new booking. As you can imagine, there are A LOT of unused tickets out there because of the pandemic. The other service we offered is the opportunity for clients to utilize our phone system for work at home employees. Many agencies did not have the technology in place to do this and we felt this was another opportunity to help our partners get through the crisis.

### ABC: What's your outlook for corporate travel from this point?

Paquette: 2021 at this point is an unknown, there's so much out there right now with the vaccines, potential herd immunity, variants of the virus, etc. If I were to guess, based on my communications within the industry and the corporate world, I would expect a bump in corporate travel by May or June. At this point, I think corporations will start testing the water and get their people back out there. Then, by the end of this year, maybe the fourth quarter, we're hoping to be back around 50 percent, if the vaccine is highly effective, people are willing to take it, and the correct precautions are taken. Then, maybe by the second quarter next year, we can get the industry back to 75 percent of normal. It might take another year or so after that to get back to pre-pandemic travel levels.

#### ABC: In normal times, what advantages does an agency gain from using an after-hours service?

Paquette: With CCRA, you are going to have a better after-hours experience than if you are calling an airline or supplier directly. If you have a weather situation, when you are dialing an agency that has a call center, you could call and get through in a few minutes, especially with CCRA. If you call the airlines, you're waiting two or two and a half hours. With CCRA's call center, it is also a one-stop shopping situation. You can book air, car and hotel in a single phone call. Otherwise, without call center support, an individual would have to call multiple providers or go to multiple websites to book their travel. CCRA also has access to our partners' corporate travel policies as well as

personal travel information, like credit cards, frequent flyer information and corporate IDs, so we have the ability to follow corporate policy. Also, all airline changes and new bookings are made in the travel agency booking system, the GDS, which allows agencies to maintain control of their PNRs. If a client calls the airline to make a change to a PNR that was booked by an agency, the airline takes control of the PNR, so the agency loses control of their booking. For smaller agencies, using CCRA gives you an opportunity to compete with the big guys by being able to offer 24/7 support.

#### **ABC:** What's your current competitive landscape?

**Paquette:** As of 2021, we currently have a few competitors. Years ago, there were five or six. Our competition has been trimmed because of all the acquisitions and mergers that have taken place in the last few years.

### ABC: What is required to become a CCRA Call Center agent?

Paquette: At CCRA we do thorough evaluations before accepting people into our training classes. Our first step is a verbal evaluation with our Operations Manager. If the Operations manager determines the individual fits within our organization, they move to step two, which is a technical evaluation with a CCRA Trainer. If the individual passes both evaluations, they are accepted into a training class. Our training classes last between two and three weeks. During training, we focus on getting the individuals efficient on GDS's and understanding CCRA policy. Once the classroom training is complete, we move the individuals to "on the job training" with a trainer being present while they assist callers.

For information contact: Glenn Freeman Director of Sales, North America CCA 24/7 Call Center Solutions Email: glenn.freeman@ccra.com Phone: 682-233-1971 (Pacific Time Zone)

a lot of clients had to reduce their staff. A lot of people were placed on furlough or terminated. Our clients were able to send calls handled by those individuals to CCRA. In the middle of the

stay in business,



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