BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Destination marketing leader David Whitaker to join Brand USA as chief marketing officer

Washington, DC - March 19, 2015

Industry veteran David Whitaker has been tapped to become chief marketing officer for Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States. Whitaker will join Brand USA on May 11, 2015, following eight years as president and CEO of Tourism Toronto, the fourth largest city in North America.

Whitaker will report to Brand USA President and CEO Christopher L. Thompson and will direct the development and implementation of the Brand USA strategic marketing plan, which includes brand management, consumer marketing, trade outreach, research, and cooperative marketing programs and platforms. Additionally, Whitaker will have lead oversight responsibility to ensure Brand USA achieves year-over-year revenue targets.

Whitaker has successfully promoted destinations for more than 25 years and has a strong track record leveraging relationships with hotels, attractions, arts and cultural facilities, restaurants, retail, entertainment venues and business services to promote communities and experiences.

After taking the helm of Tourism Toronto to promote Canada's largest city in April 2007, Whitakerembarked on an aggressive strategy to reinvigorate the greater metropolitan area as an exciting leisure and business travel destination. He did so by revamping its marketing and advertising and by focusing on attracting high-value travelers (who stay longer and spend more) primarily from major U.S. cities, the United Kingdom, Germany, China, Japan, and Brazil.

The strategy began paying off inside of three years, and by 2014 Tourism Toronto experienced its fourth consecutive year of growth in visitors from the United States and the highest number of overseas visitors in its history. In 2014, visitation reached a record 14.3 million overnight visitors who spent $6.9 billion.

"We look forward to welcoming David to the Brand USA team this May and to benefiting from his experience and expertise as a destination marketing leader," said Thompson. "Under David's leadership, both Toronto and Miami realized year-over-year increases in domestic and international visitation for two of North America's largest cities, and we are fortunate to have him as we take the next step in Brand USA's evolution as the nation's destination marketing organization," Thompson added.

Prior to Tourism Toronto, Whitaker spent 17 years with the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, most recently as the executive vice president and chief marketing officer where he had a similar role of helping shape Miami's image and promoting leisure and business travel. Before joining the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau in 1990, Whitaker worked in a number of capacities with the United Way of Miami-Dade, most recently as vice president of marketing.

"I could not be more thrilled to join the dynamic team at Brand USA. Having a chance to help represent our country and assist in inviting the world to visit the USA is both an honor and a privilege."

In addition to his leadership role at Tourism Toronto, Whitaker is an active participant in the travel and tourism industry—serving on the boards of the Travel Industry Association of Canada and DMAI's Destination and Travel Foundation for the past two years. Additionally, Whitaker currently chairs and has been a member of the Core Markets Committee of the Canadian Tourism Commission for the past four years.

Whitaker is a graduate of the University of South Florida with a degree in mass communications/public relations. He and his wife, Lily, are currently planning their move to the Washington, D.C. area.

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About Brand USA
Brand USA is the nation's destination marketing organization, dedicated to attracting legitimate international inbound travel to strengthen the U.S. economy, increase exports, create quality jobs, and promote community prosperity. By running data-driven campaigns and unifying messaging across industry and government, Brand USA positions the United States as a top global destination while providing current visa and entry information.

Over the past 13 years Brand USA has driven 11.3 million additional international visitors who spent $38.1 billion in the United States, leading to $82.9 billion in total economic impact and sustaining an average of more than 40,000 jobs each year. These efforts have generated nearly $11 billion in attributable tax receipts at the federal, state, and local levels.