



INSITES AND INSPIRATIONS | JANUARY 2021



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## SITE Canada President's Message



It's here, 2021! And the road to recovery is underway. We are ready for the year that lies ahead. As our industry rebuilds; with vaccines being distributed, program planning underway and contracts being signed, the desire to travel is strong. The signs of revitalization are encouraging. As leaders of the incentive travel world, we are set to be a part of the rebound.

As your new board looks ahead, we will learn, connect and inspire each other. A Peer Connect Task Force, made up of leaders from our Chapter, was asked to examine how we can evolve member engagement. It will provide recommendations on how to address the challenges facing members during these unprecedented times. Committee findings focused on

five main areas: Communication, Engaging Events Strategy, Member Vs. Non-Member Engagement, Best Practices for Collecting Sharing and Marketing.

Each director is now incorporating the recommendations into portfolio plans for 2021. The year ahead will offer compelling events along with an array of educational and networking opportunities. Things we once knew will look a little different as we move forward. While it takes courage to let go of what we know, embracing the new will bring about fresh approaches to what we do and how we do it.

I would like to express my personal gratitude and thanks to the task force: Roger Haskett, Diane Alexander, Melaya Horsten, Karel Gomez, Jason Thompson and Ashlee Posner for their time and commitment. The ideas shared will be a part of the path forward for SITE Canada.

It's a great pleasure to introduce your 2021 board. Here are a few words from the board directors and their vision to the ongoing success of SITE Canada. We invite you to reach out and contact any of us with your ideas and comments. If you're interested in being involved on a committee, we would love to hear from you.

Let's use our SITE bond and the incredible passion we have to be a part of this recovery. Let the comeback journey begin!

Pearleen Mofford, CIS  
SITE Canada President 2021

**Pearleen's Bio:**

As a long-time champion of the travel industry, I've spent my career delivering exceptional experiences and forging long-lasting business relationships. My expertise in planning has resulted in developing one-of-a-kind authentic, culturally specific meeting and incentive programs for visitors from around the world. I am known for my creative thinking and 'think big' philosophy that's resulted in doing things that have never been done before.

My success in business development is further underpinned by two decades at the helm of an integrated communications agency. I'm also a graduate of Mount Saint Vincent University with a Bachelor of Public Relations degree. For over 10 years, I've volunteered at Halifax's Phoenix House Youth and actively support organizations focused on bringing an end to homelessness in my

community.

Currently I'm Director of Sales at Fox Harb'r Resort, Canada's landmark oceanside 5-star retreat for the MICE market. I love bringing groups to Nova Scotia to experience a part of Canada that is a true gem. A place so special that people want to return to again and again. Getting to do what I love every day is a real blessing!

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## Introducing Your 2021 SITE Canada Board of Directors

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### Liz Holtby - President Elect

#### Liz's Goals for 2021:

There is no better time to be involved in SITE. I consider the COVID-19 pandemic an opportunity to garner more visibility, try new things and use new technology. How do we provide value and support to our members to ensure retention, especially now when many industry professionals are laid off? As President-Elect, I look forward to getting innovative alongside our SITE Canada President and board to provide compelling educational content, create personal connections and improve lives. We will lead the conversation on returning safely to face-to-face incentive travel programs, meetings and events.



#### Liz's Bio:

Liz has held a variety of operations-related positions in the marketing and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events) industries over the course of her career.

Currently, Vice President, Operations at Meeting Escrow, Liz manages financial risk for a variety of organizations. She handles multi-million-dollar client advance deposit transactions for their events, in segregated domestic and foreign currency trust accounts.

Liz teaches the next generation of Business Events Industry leaders at Durham and Centennial Colleges and is a member of their Program Advisory Committees.

She is a graduate of Ryerson University's Bachelor of Applied Arts in Hospitality and Tourism, is TICO (Travel Industry Council of Ontario) certified and is the President-Elect for the 2021 SITE Board of Directors.

Liz is based in Toronto, Canada

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## Gabrielle Spanton - Immediate Past President



### Gabby's Goals for 2021:

I'm looking forward to continuing with the SITE Canada Board in 2021 in the role as Immediate Past President.

My goals include, but are not limited to, a smooth transition and support for the President, Pearleen Mofford, and the entire 2021 board, along with specific focus on sponsorship and sustainability.

### Gabby's Bio:

Gabrielle aka "Gabby" brings more than thirty years of practical meeting and incentive experience to her role with SITE Canada. Her career has evolved over time from airline sales to senior leadership positions with various companies including 3<sup>rd</sup> party, TMC and DMC. Her expertise includes MICE, SMMP, live, hybrid and virtual events as well as regional and global sales and marketing initiatives.

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## Cate Banfield, CIS, CITP - VP Finance

### Cate's Goals for 2021:

In 2021 I am thrilled to be back with the SITE Canada Board of Directors in the VP Finance role while also providing support and mentorship to the Social Committee. In this role my focus will be providing financial oversight of SITE Canada in partnership with our partners at Fletcher Wright Associates.



One of our key goals in 2021 will be to further streamline our budget processes across our events in an effort to help our committees capture event and activity costs and clearer real time cost management. With the ongoing evolution of our event portfolio in 2021 across live, digital and virtual activities we have an opportunity to reimagine our event mix and in turn, rethink how we set up our budgets to manage event costs and sponsorships accordingly. Bring on 2021!

**Cate's Bio:**

For Cate, it all boils down to the attendee journey. With more than twenty years' experience managing, producing and designing across TV, film and global events - Cate now leads a wildly talented team of experience designers, creative directors, innovators and strategists at BCD M&E, a global brand experience company. Cate and her team are responsible for designing and developing program strategy; marcom and audience acquisition; creative and experience design and measurement and engagement strategies across Fortune 100 and emerging market clients. From live to virtual, Cate and team are passionate about designing experiences that power engagement and fuel brand love.

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## Karel Gomez - Director Technology and Innovation

**Karel's Goals for 2021:**

2021 is going to be a pivotal year and I am honored to be part of the SITE Canada Board of Directors. I am looking forward to an exciting year. A year where we finally leave behind the shadows of 2020. A year where we do not have to be afraid of losing our job, a year where we do not have to worry about our family and friends. Where we can breathe freely and without masks. A year where we can finally meet and travel again. At SITE Canada, that is what we will all be working for.

**Karel's Bio:**

My name is Karel Gomez, and I was born in Cuba many summers ago. I moved to Canada 13 winters ago with my family in search of freedom and better opportunities. I genuinely enjoy a great conversation, especially if accompanied with a good scotch and a Cuban cigar.

I started in the hospitality industry in 1996, working as a bell boy in Varadero, Cuba. I was then promoted to Assistant Front Desk Manager and became Front Desk

Manager of a 780-room hotel after that. That was when I started my bachelor's degree in business and Hotel Management, graduating with honors in 2001. From 2001 to 2007 I worked as a Rooms Division Director and as Director of Sales and Marketing with Melia Hotels. I moved to Canada in 2007 where I have been working in different hotels, mainly as a Sales Manager for MICE. I joined Iberostar Hotels & Resorts in 2019 as their Global MICE Sales Manager here in Canada.

I even ventured into being my own boss from 2011 to 2015, when I had my own restaurant. Fun fact, it was not Cuban Food.

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## Kari Lynn Larsen - Director Education

### Kari Lynn's Goals for 2021:

As Director of Education, my main goal over the next year is to bring forward timely and current topics of interest, that will provide personal and professional growth to our members. The year will bring uncharted conditions and the resulting educational opportunities will be varied throughout the year. This road to recovery will require patience and focus with innovation and growth being primary goals for education of our members. I will strive to bring forward quality educational webinars and workshops covering both virtual, hybrid and in-person incentive opportunities and events.



The “comeback journey” that our industry is faced with, will require education to encompass leadership, government awareness, health and safety, innovative industry offerings, creative forward thinking, as well as network building, partnerships and service offering unification.

### Kari Lynn's Bio:

Kari Lynn Larsen, President and CEO, Dragonfly Meeting Solutions Inc. Kari Lynn has an extensive account and project management background working in both corporate and agency environments, consulting on virtual, hybrid & in-person event formats for incentives, conferences and live event productions. Kari Lynn's creative passion and innovative style ensure her clients never settle for ordinary. With over thirty years of experience in creating the art of the possible, she continually strives to show her clients event experiences that excite and provide lifetime memories. She is an active member of both SITE and MPI.

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## **Diane Mihalek, CITP - Director Social**



### **Diane's Goals for 2021:**

As a returning member of the board, I will continue to contribute not only my skills but my passion for SITE Canada, and what SITE stands for - to provide insight and connections that will unleash our potential through extraordinary, motivational experiences so that we as an industry may deliver greater business results.

My experience on the board over the past two years has provided me with the opportunity to connect with colleagues and associates not only on a national level, but with those around the world. This has allowed me to collaborate with others to learn and grow together and I look forward to continuing on this mission as we steer through these unprecedented times.

My goal in 2021 is to continue to spread the word about SITE and its benefits as well as to further the discussion around sustainability within the incentive industry. I will endeavour to design events that will enable the maximum number of guests to participate in a safe manner, while providing excellent networking opportunities and working with the board to determine ways to raise funds if the usual fundraising opportunities are not possible. This may include a hybrid approach, but may also include an online auction as well as other event possibilities.

### **Diane's Bio:**

As founder and principal owner of DCM Event Management, Diane Côté Mihalek brings over 25 years of experience in public relations, corporate event management and sports administration. In addition to being bilingual, she brings top-notch strategic thinking and a wealth of planning expertise to each and every project. Leading a team of like-minded, equally passionate event professionals, she thrives on collaborating with clients to make their goals a reality. DCM Event Management was recently a finalist for the Oakville Awards for Business Excellence in the Small Business category.

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## **Ashlee Posner - Director Member Events**

### **Ashlee's Goals for 2021:**

As a global leader in motivational experiences, SITE will need to adapt and reimagine a new course for our events and the industry, given the challenges

presented by the pandemic. I believe these challenges will drive innovation and I look forward to being a part of a year filled with inspiration and creativity for our industry. I am excited to develop strategies to adapt and energize in a year that will look untraditional. We will find new tools and practices in our events and that will add value our members - and have fun doing it.



### **Ashlee's Bio:**

Ashlee is the CEO & Co-Founder of Aromachology and The Perfume & Cologne Bar. With a background in Chemical Engineering, she started her career in the beauty industry. She has spent the last 10 years utilizing her in depth understanding of scent and psychology to help brands, event spaces and planners navigate emotional branding and create private label products and innovative interactive event activations, such as The Perfume Bar, The Cologne Bar and The Wellness Aromatherapy Bar. She is looking forward to taking the challenges of the pandemic to drive innovation in a year filled with inspiration and creativity for the industry.

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## **Gisele Robert - Director Communications**



### **Gisele's Goals for 2021:**

I am especially excited to be SITE Canada's incoming Director of Communications. My goal will be to maximize marketing efforts to engage the membership. As we navigate our way through COVID, we need to feel a sense of belonging, inspiration, and validation of purpose. It is essential that we have our ear to the ground and consider ways to have a deeper connection to our members.

I believe in open communication and collaborative approach. I am keen to hear how I can help, what captures your attention, and where we need to shed light on pressing issues and concerns. What I am most looking forward to in 2021 is seeing everyone's smiling face in person!

### **Gisele's Bio:**

Gisele Robert has acquired more than 25 years of experience working in the meetings and incentive travel industry, corporate communications, speaker representation, and television broadcasting. Gisele has handled high profile accounts, cultivated important supplier contacts internationally, and managed



comprehensive travel and event programs. Gisele currently works on a contract basis in business development, account management, and project management.

Gisele's diverse clientele includes financial and professional services, medical, telecommunications, and home improvement. Dedicated to planning top-notch programs, she is a relationship builder and enjoys the strategic aspects of program development and delivery. Always focused on fresh initiatives for clients, Gisele manages the life of a project and all of its moving parts. Her approach is solution-driven exemplified by her ease at bringing people together in collaborative spirit.

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## Andres Serrato, CITP - Director Young Leaders

### Andres Goals for 2021:

First and foremost my main objective in 2021 would be to increase our Young Leader membership. I believe it is important to have a fresh source of members and ideas that will keep on benefiting our association in the years to come. I would like to create a Young Leader Committee with whom to work on the additional goals presented herein; this committee would also help promote the Global Young Leader's Conference. I'd like to find a solution to bridge the distance between Young Leaders and potential SITE members located outside of the GTA. Lastly, I want to make sure I communicate effectively to both board and SITE Canada members in general, the importance of the Young Leader's program and involve them in transmitting the message within their network.



### Andres Bio:

Andres Serrato, CITP has over twelve years of experience in different segments of the travel industry and a career focused in the Caribbean and Latin America region. He began back in his native Cancun with the Apple Leisure group, gaining experience in meetings and events with Amstar DMC as a sales executive before moving for cross-training as sales manager for upper-upscale and luxury hotels at Palace Resorts. He is currently director of corporate sales, supervising teams in the Dominican Republic and Mexico for Connect DMC. His journey with SITE started in 2016 and since then he has attended or hosted over 40+ SITE events, served on the Young Leaders committee for two years in a row and has co-chaired other activities around the world before joining the SITE Canada board in 2020.

## Lina Thompson, CITP - Director Golf



### Lina's Goals for 2021:

Flocking to the outdoors to socialize with friends and family has become a reality during this COVID world that we are all trying to navigate. SITE Golf hopes to reunite our community in a day of outdoor activity where we can see each other in person, while feeling safe in the outdoor environment.

This year, we won't preclude non-golfers and will create an inclusive day where golfers can golf and others can participate in non-golf activities that allow for everyone to enjoy the outdoors with colleagues, industry peers and clients alike. My goal is to plan and execute a fun event that maximizes participation and ROI to sponsors, which ultimately serves to achieve strong revenues for the association.

### Lina's Bio:

A 30 year veteran in the hospitality industry, Lina has spent most of her career in Hotel sales based in Toronto. Having worked national and global sales for brands like Delta Hotels (pre-Marriott) and IHG, she found her true passion in the meeting and events side of the business when she joined Fairmont Hotels, proudly representing the Canadian Western Mountain Region, namely Fairmont Banff Springs, Chateau Lake Louise, Jasper Park Lodge and Chateau Whistler. So grateful to have worked through this pandemic, Lina is super excited to plan and execute one of SITE Canada's first in person events in 2021! The SITE Golf Tournament has always been an important event to the chapter, and while we have some challenges to overcome, Lina and her engaged and enthusiastic committee are ready to *change it up a bit* and make it an event you won't want to miss!

## Jan Zandboer - Director Membership and Ambassador Program

### Jan's Goals for 2021:

2021 is our comeback year and while it will be challenging for many as we rebuild the membership committee will focus on how we best serve our members and ensure the benefits of a SITE Canada membership are realized to the fullest. We are also going to be expanding our ability to better serve our members in all Canadian markets and will be rolling out an Ambassador program to keep our members connected from coast to coast.



**Jan's Bio:**

Born in Bergen op Zoom, The Netherlands Jan was raised in a hotel/restaurant family. He went to Hotel Management School in Tilburg, The Netherlands. After his mandatory time in the Dutch army he went to work at Holland America Line as a seagoing hotel officer working different positions in Food & Beverage departments. On board he met his wife and they settled in The Netherlands for 2 years. During this period Jan was the senior purchasing officer at United States Line. In 1987 they moved to Canada where Jan found employment at the Netherlands Board of Tourism. After 17 years he started his own sales and marketing company representing a variety of companies and products. In 2011 Jan acquired Select Group Marketing, a company specializing in representing Destination Management Companies specializing in the Meeting & Incentive market.

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**SITE Canada ICE Awards 2020 - Deadline January 20**

SITE Canada ICE Awards are presented annually in two categories: 'Program Excellence' and 'Destination Excellence'.

NEW FOR 2020: The ICE Awards now include a Virtual Event category.

Submit your program for this prestigious industry award.

[For all the details click here. Links to submit your application via SurveyMonkey are included in the PDF.](#)

The deadline for ICE Awards submissions is end of day January 20, 2021.

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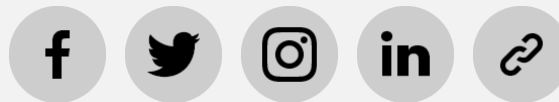
**Volunteer Champion Nominations 2020 - Deadline January 13**

As more volunteers are coming aboard and getting involved in our SITE Canada Chapter, we invite your nomination of a peer for our Volunteer Champion Award. If you know a SITE Canada volunteer who goes above and beyond to give back to the SITE Canada Chapter please consider nominating them for the Volunteer Champion Award.

[Click here for more details and to download the nomination ballot.](#)

The deadline for nominations for the Volunteer Champion Award is end of day January 13, 2021.

**SITE CANADA 2021 STRATEGIC SPONSORS**



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