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TOUR OPERATORS



Kasey Austin: Austin, 23, was born into the travel industry. She's the daughter of Dan Austin, founder and director of Austin-Lehman Adventures, and so travel was the daily fare. She has explored Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, the Galapagos Islands, Costa Rica, Germany and Holland, as well as much of the western U.S. and Canada. Starting at the age

of 11, she spent her summers working with the company, though she doesn't think of it as work. Now a college graduate, she has thrown herself full-time into the company, responsible for running guide operations within the office and leading family trips in Yellowstone and the Tetons.



Emma Beckerle: Beckerle, 24, has travel in her blood. Her mother is from Dublin, and her family often traveled to Ireland, as well as to other places. She spent her first years of college in London before returning to the States, then spent the summer between her junior and senior years doing an internship in Cape Town, South Africa.

Beckerle's mother was in finance, and that was the course she thought she herself would follow, but she found her dream job at Insight in 2009 and quickly worked her way up to her current position as marketing manager.



Megan Bryant: Bryant, 30, Africa director for Cox & Kings Americas, early in life became accustomed to travel, as her family moved around the southern U.S. for her father's career. She considered pursuing a career in hotel management, but in 2005 she found Cox & Kings, the world's oldest tour operator. She started as a tour consultant

for Africa, and she was instrumental in developing the Seychelles for the company. In 2010, when the product manager for Africa left, Bryant was given the job. She created a Cox & Kings Dream Trip called "Primates and Birding: Congo, São Tomé and Príncipe" that was selected by *National Geographic Traveler* as one of its 50 Tours of a Lifetime.



Jennine Cohen: Though some put in a 40-hour work week and then find time for their passion, 31-year-old Cohen, senior director of Latin American programs for Geographic Expeditions, finds meaning in her work. A graduate of UCLA, Cohen was introduced to adventure travel through UCLA's Outdoor Leadership program, through

which she led backpacking and camping trips. After college she

moved to New York and managed events for *Elite Traveler* magazine, but she needed to get outside again. Cohen resigned, and within two weeks was trekking through Central America as a trip leader for Outward Bound. After that she worked with Backroads, managing its Latin America operations. She then took her current position with Geographic Expeditions.



David DiGregorio: It took a while for DiGregorio, South African Tourism's 30-year-old marketing manager, to realize that travel could be a career. After college, he worked in web development, then advertising, before moving to Sydney. There he promoted Israel as a trade destination, and his success led to a job with the French wine industry, then he worked as media liaison with the U.S. Olympic Committee in Beijing. Returning to the U.S., he started working for South African Tourism a year before the 2010 FIFA World Cup. DiGregorio has served on the regional board of the Association for the Promotion of Tourism to Africa, and is marketing advisor to the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds.



Diana Ferro: For Ferro, product manager for Perillo Tours and ItalyVacations.com, traveling to Italy is as natural as breathing. While the 35-year-old was born in America, her family is from Italy, and she visited every summer. She earned a double major in psychology and international languages and culture, but after an internship in a hospital, she decided to emphasize the cultural side of her education, and took a job with the Italian Tourist Board. She caught the attention of Steve Perillo, who offered her the job she has now. Ferro has helped the company evolve by meeting the demands of sophisticated clients, and she created itineraries that are regionally focused.



Caroleen Leverrier: At 30, Leverrier is product development manager for Eurobound. She moved to Los Angeles after graduating from La Sorbonne Nouvelle University in Paris with a degree in English and American Literature and History. About tourism she knew little. "My experience in the travel industry started in Paris, where I was working in reservations for a French hotel chain during my college years," she says. "I quickly developed my own client base at Eurobound and learned to work on both sides of the spectrum: hotel contracting and buyer on one side, and exhibitor and agency sales calls on the other." As product development manager, Leverrier negotiates hotel contracts and develops programs.



Steve Lima: Lima, a 31-year-old Rhode Islander, is marketing manager for G Adventures, the adventure tours operator. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in marketing, he took a job with a marketing company working with large pharmaceutical companies to help further advancement in medicine. It gave him insight into global business and helped him develop marketing skills, but it didn't inspire him. Instead, he became interested in adventure travel. Lima planned a climbing trip with a group of friends, and today he is the marketing manager for one of the world's largest adventure travel companies. He's been with G Adventures for nine years, putting his marketing skills to work for a product he is truly passionate about.

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Erin McCarthy: McCarthy, 35, senior director, digital and American Express Vacations marketing for Travel Impressions, joined the company in 1998 as a reservations agent and was quickly promoted to marketing specialist. She worked her way up the organizational ranks rapidly over the next 13 years, continually taking on additional responsibilities.

When Travel Impressions needed a tightly focused team to provide marketing for American Express Vacations, McCarthy stepped up. In 2011 she was promoted to her current position. She brought together individuals in the areas of promotion/merchandising, email, search-engine marketing, new media and social media, and within three months had them working as a cohesive team.



Willie Montano: Montano, 34, was born in Colombia, a long way from where he is today, working as the director of advertising and online marketing for CIE Tours. After graduating high school when he was only 14, he moved to the U.S. to live with his uncle and pursue educational opportunities. His uncle provided maintenance for CIE's office, and one day Montano asked if he could be put to work. CIE gave him a job in the mailroom, though he was quickly promoted, working in accounting, then brochure development and pricing. He took college courses, learning Web design and e-commerce.



Kenneth Pringle: Pringle's passion for travel began when he was a child, as he traveled and moved back and forth from Germany, where he was born, to military installations in the U.S. The 33-year-old's travel horizons expanded again when he was 16 and lived in Finland as an exchange student. After earning degrees in economics and European studies, Pringle moved to Portland, Ore., and started his travel career in Enterprise Rent-A-Car's management training program. After working his way up to the job of branch manager, he was hired by Avanti Destinations as a rail travel consultant. By 2007 he had advanced to call center manager and in 2011 he was named director of reservation sales.



Ashish Sanghrajka: Sanghrajka, 34, president of Big Five Tours, was born in Kenya, where his parents operated the tour operator, so he developed an awareness of the business early. As a schoolboy, he learned from the bottom up, stuffing envelopes in the mailroom and typing itineraries. After graduating from the University of Arizona with a degree in political science focused on international economics, Sanghrajka did a stint on Wall Street. But he began to look back at the family business, and in 2002 he returned. He started in the Asia and Orient division, took charge of the division, then began overseeing marketing for the company. In 2005 he was named vice president of sales and marketing, and in 2008 became president.



Karen Spinelli: As manager of media and promotions, now in her eighth year with Apple Vacations, Spinelli, 31, oversees the advertising strategy in many of the company's markets. Her colleagues praise her ability to create and execute high-profile marketing campaigns at the corporate level. "Karen is a high achiever with a great soul and a positive

attitude," says Sandy Babin, vice president of marketing at Apple Vacations. "She helps everyone she meets in her personal life and in business." During her tenure, Spinelli has worked with multiple media outlets to conceptualize ideas that benefit the company's hotel and tourism partners. She also has established relationships and collaborated with brands such as Corona and Walgreens to create larger reach for the Apple Vacations brand.



Ian Swain II: At 24, Swain serves as marketing manager for Swain Tours, his family's tour operation. Since becoming a full-time employee last year, Swain has updated the company's website and redesigned the South Pacific travel brochures for 2012. His father and mother started this Philadelphia-based tour operator in 1987, and the company is now a leading provider of customized trips to Australia, the South Pacific, India and Africa. The younger Swain started off as an intern and managed the company's social media accounts. Now, he oversees the day-to-day marketing operations and is preparing for an expanded role within the company. "Swain Tours has been around for 25 years now with my father firmly at the helm," he says. "It's hard to know what the future holds, but Ian Sr. is happy that there are family members involved who continue the tradition that he and Linda Swain started."



Jim Tedesco: Tedesco, 27, began his travel industry career in April 2007 as a marketing coordinator in the sales and promotions department of Liberty Travel. After Flight Centre acquired Liberty, Tedesco was named team leader for the newly formed retail marketing department, leading marketing initiatives, ensuring that the stores met the minimum standards of the company and working with retail locations to build local awareness and sales. He then accepted a position with Liberty's sister company GOGO Vacations as the business development manager for its top producing territories. In May 2011 he was named director of marketing for GOGO.



Sandra Thomas: At 33, Thomas serves as e-marketing and web manager for Celtic Tours World Vacations. After starting her own marketing and design business at the age of 26, she joined Celtic Tours, where she now manages the company's growing digital presence. Earlier this year, she developed a creative campaign that rewards randomly selected travel agents with a 100 percent commission. During her two years with the company, Thomas has devised a plan to augment online traffic through search-engine optimization, social networking and blogging. Her efforts have increased web traffic by 40 percent and doubled quarterly revenue. Thomas is traveling this summer to a remote village in India where she will teach enslaved children and young women about the Gospel.