

Carlson Hotels Worldwide Unveils Leadership Strategy in Burgeoning Global Travel Industry

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President and CEO Jay Witzel Predicts 'Golden Age' of Global Travel Will Propel New Generation of Worldwide Growth for Carlson Hotel Brands

With a foundation of nearly 1,000 hotels in 70 countries, Carlson Hotels Worldwide President and CEO Jay Witzel predicted here today that a coming "Golden Age" of global travel will accelerate the company's expansion to a new position of world-wide leadership.

In the opening keynote address of the 2008 Global Business Conference of Carlson Hotels Worldwide, Witzel stated that Carlson is uniquely positioned to capture the global opportunities offered by the world's growing travel industry. Carlson Hotels includes five brands, Regents Hotels & Resorts, Radisson Hotels & Resorts, Park Plaza Hotels & Resorts, Country Inns & Suites By Carlson, and Park Inn.

"Fueled by growth in traditional markets, plus millions of new travelers in the emerging markets of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Latin America, our industry is an accelerating and global economic powerhouse," Witzel told the conference of over 1,000 property owners, managers, partners and vendors from around the world. "The world is offering us a playing field of historic opportunity where we intend to lead and win through an integrated strategy of hotel ownership, management and licensing."

Witzel noted that every second of every day, 25 people cross national borders, creating one billion journeys per year and generating an international travel boom. "Although there are short term concerns about an economic slowdown that fill the news channels today, the longer term outlook for the industry is one of unstoppable momentum," he stated.

Witzel said that Carlson Hotels Worldwide is uniquely positioned to excel in the coming "Golden Age" of travel because of the strong and established global presence of its five brands in 70 countries. "We are one of the leading global hotel companies in the number of countries where we operate worldwide, which translates into consumer awareness and brand power in far-reaching markets," he stated.

Witzel noted that Carlson Hotels Worldwide achieved record system-wide revenues of US\$7 billion in 2007, an increase of 13 percent from 2006. The company also added 74 new properties globally and signed 141 projects.

Witzel challenged conference attendees to focus on five strategic areas to power the organization to its next level of success. "We must focus on the most important drivers of future success: investments in our employees, customers, physical assets, brand management and operational excellence," he said. "Global support for this strategy, coupled with local implementation at every hotel location, will fuel our growth and leadership worldwide," he said.

The Carlson Hotels Worldwide Annual Business Conference, which featured an overall theme of "Imagine What's Yet To Come" is taking place Feb. 25-27 in Las Vegas. The conference concluded with a day-long celebration of the 70th anniversary of the parent company, Carlson.

Carlson Hotels Worldwide is one of the major operating groups of Carlson, a global leader in providing marketing, travel and hospitality services. Other names among the Carlson family of brands and services are: Carlson Marketing, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, T.G.I. Friday's and Pick Up Stix restaurants. The company has been recognized by both Fortune and Working Mother magazines as one of the "100 best places to work for in America," Carlson corporate headquarters are in Minneapolis, Minn.

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