

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## Monday

**11:30 – Registration / Check-in**

**12:30 – Opening – *Get Ready!***

12:30 – Box Lunch (Tentative)

12:45 – *Welcome and Conference Overview* – Carrol Harris

1:00 – *Why the Road Runner?* 😊 *A Networking Activity* – Pat Ford

**1:15 – Keynote Speakers**

**1:10 - First Keynote Speaker Introduction – Richard Aday** – Think Reservations

**1:15 – Chris Gregoire - *The Northwest: Mega Market; Mega Potential***

**Description:** *The Seattle economic engine has driven not just Seattle but the entire Puget Sound Region. Vancouver, B.C., Seattle and Portland have much in common: unsurpassed beauty; proximity to Asia; and market-leading capabilities in key economic sectors. By linking these cities, the Cascade Corridor can accomplish far more than they can accomplish alone.*

**Bio:** Along with being the former Director of Ecology, the Attorney General and Governor of Washington, Christine Gregoire is currently CEO of Challenge Seattle and Co-chair of the Cascadia Innovation Corridor. In those roles of relevance in the Corridor she is working on ultra high-speed transportation from Vancouver BC to Portland. For Challenge Seattle she is also working on homelessness and transportation.

**1:50 – David Blandford - *Tourism in the Mega Market: Driving Overnight Demand and Regional Resilience***

**Description:** *David focus will be on Tourism’s Role in the mega market economy and how the State of Washington Tourism will support stimulating overnight visitor stays. He will emphasize cross board partnerships, trends, opportunities and challenges for tourism industry marketers. Along with a focus on rural vs. urban tourism marketing, he will provide some tips and tactics for innkeepers.*

**Bio:** David Blandford is the Executive Director of State of Washington Tourism (SWT), the private nonprofit marketing organization that markets the state as a premier travel destination regionally, across the U.S. and around the world. He assumed the role in May 2020 with immediate priorities to re-establish a statewide tourism marketing program and create recovery and destination development programs for the state tourism industry in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He is a long-time member of the U.S. Travel Association’s Communications Committee, actively supporting and defending the national travel and tourism industry through policy, public affairs and communications. He is a current member of Destination International’s Advocacy Committee and a 20-year member of the Society of American Travel Writers and Public Relations Society of American, serving in various leadership roles with both associations.

**About State of Washington Tourism** – State of Washington Tourism (SWT) is a 501[c]6 organization established by industry stakeholders with the sole mission of developing and sustaining State of Washington destination tourism marketing. SWT

**2:30: Quick Break – Get a Beverage**

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### 2:40 – Networking Speed Talks

- 2:35 - Formation of small groups – Craig Jaeger
- 2:45 - Speed Talks – Small group facilitators

### 3:30 – Beverage Break – *Mingle and share what you gained from the Speed Talks*

3:45 – Choice Workshops Session 1 – See page 4-5 of this document for workshop descriptions

4:45 – Trade Shows & No Host Bar and Light Appetizers – *Complete Your Trade Show Passport*

6:45 – Dinner Buffet and No Host Bar

## TUESDAY

### 8:00: Opening

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 8:30 Welcome Back – Carrol Harris
- 8:40 Table Networking Activity – Craig Jaeger

### 9:00: General Session - Casey Cozzens - *Tell Your Story: What Makes a Great Website*

**Description:** *Ever wonder what makes a website successful? Learn how to critique your website and better understand elements and content to attract more traffic, enhance design, and reduce friction during the guest booking experience."*

**Bio:** Casey Cozzens has been with ResNexus for 2 years where he manages a website team. Prior to joining ResNexus, Casey received a background in graphic design, and has a decade of website design experience. Through that decade of experience, Casey has seen it all. His favorite thing about his job is seeing the reaction on property owner's faces when he presents them with their new websites. Outside the office Casey enjoys the outdoors, spending time with his three kids, and buying and fixing up old or rundown cars."

### 10:00: Beverage and Snack Break

10:15: **Business Meeting – Get Set** - Carrol Harris (Alternative session to be provided for out of state individuals)

- What's Happening – past, present, future
- Making WIIN Work for you
- Awards

11:30: **Lunch –Buffet** – Sponsored by Think Reservations -

Pick up your lunch and get settled

11: 50: **General Session - Exploring and Improving the Guest Journey** – Richard Aday – Think Reservations

**Description:** The guest journey is a driving force of your business - it drives increased revenue, reduced operations, and higher customer satisfaction. Let's explore every step of the guest journey and discuss the most effective solutions in providing a high- quality experience. Join Richard Aday as he walks you through various technical tools and solutions that can transform the way your guest experiences your business.

**Bio:** Richard Aday is the CEO and Principal Engineer at ThinkReservations, a leading hospitality platform in the US that helps businesses increase revenue and save time. As an Electrical and Computer Engineer from companies like Amazon.com, Microsoft and IBM, Richard now has over 10 years of experience in the lodging industry as CEO of ThinkReservations. Richard is a power house resource for the industry. He has

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worked personally with thousands of lodging businesses which give him the ability to understand the needs of the industry and the solutions that will take us to the next level.

**12:30 – 1:30: Choice Workshop Session 2** – See pages 4 and 5 for workshop descriptions

**1:30 – 1:45 Beverage Break**

**1:45 – 2:45: Lisa Kolb – Acorn Marketing – Mt Rainier Sponsor - *The New Normal: Marketing that Works***

**Description:** *Did you know that Google is the #1 provider of bookings for most lodging providers? As Google marketing continues to change, successful lodging property owners understand how to adapt to these changes for their benefit. Today, traditional, organic placement and resulting bookings continue to diminish as Local Google Travel bookings continue to increase. What's more, traditional SEO has little to do with top visibility in Google Travel. This session will help you to understand the difference and learn strategies to grow your visibility in Google Travel.*

**Bio:** Lisa Kolb, Acorn's president and co-founder of Acorn Marketing, is a well-known and in-demand expert conference speaker who has taught at national and regional innkeeping and lodging conferences for the past 2 decades. Acorn Marketing is a marketing agency and website design firm with an emphasis on small lodging properties such as Bed and Breakfasts, Inns, Boutique Hotels, and Vacation Rentals. It is celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and we continue work hard to make sure we're on the cutting edge of online marketing to be the best job for their clients.

**2:45 – 3:00 - Beverage and Snack Break**

**3:00 – 4:00: General Session: Shane Robbins - CloudBeds - Mt Rainier Sponsor - *From OTAs to Direct Bookings and Back Again: How to Evaluate and Build a Channel Mix that Drives More Reservations***

**Description:** Love them or not, online travel agencies (OTAs) play a critical role in every property's distribution strategy, but they shouldn't be your only distribution channel. In this session, we will break down everything from the big to niche OTAs to Google's free booking links to new strategies to drive more direct bookings. We will also explore alternative distribution channels and the basics of building a channel mix that works for your businesses.

**Bio:** Shane Robbins is the Director of Product Marketing at Cloudbeds, the award-winning hospitality management platform powering lodging businesses around the globe. An expert in market trends and competitive intelligence research, Shane leads the messaging, planning and delivery of Cloudbeds services and products to market. Since joining the company, he has helped with the launch of several new offerings, including Cloudbeds Amplify, a new done-for-you-digital marketing service designed to drive more direct bookings for lodging businesses.

**4:00 – 5:00: General Session - Getting Ready to GO!**

***Conference Evaluation & Volunteer Opportunities*** – Carrol Harris

***Send off*** – Anthony Anton - Washington Hospitality Association

**Description:** *Anthony will get us ready to "GO" by sending us off with thoughts about trends in hospitality now and for the future.*

**BIO** - Anthony Anton is President and CEO of the Washington Hospitality Association. He has been with the association for more than 20 years, and draws on experience being raised in a family with more than 70 years of hospitality experience in the state. As CEO, Anthony has helped the Washington

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Hospitality Association expand, launched initiatives to help our workforce succeed, and has focused on protecting and enhancing the hospitality business climate. He also led the industry association through the pandemic — a time in which hospitality was hit the hardest of any industry by far. The team at the Association educated, facilitated, and/or secured hundreds of millions in relief dollars for Washington Hospitality businesses and dozens of regulatory relief measures reducing the number of closures in the second six months of the pandemic by nearly 400% compared to the first six months.

### CHOICE WORKSHOPS OVERVIEW

#### Session One: Monday

**Basics Analytics How to Use them to Support Your Inn** - with Lisa Kolb – Acorn Marketing

**Description:** *Are your marketing dollars working hard? Or hardly working? How do you know for sure? We invite you to join this session to better understand the basics of using Google Analytics to identify what is and is not working when it comes to your traffic and direct bookings. You will also learn what a direct booking is and is not, and how to determine if your analytics is set up correctly so you can track your data and make wise decisions when spending your marketing dollars. Bad data results in bad decisions and lost revenue. Learn how to get it right!*

**Bio:** See prior description

**Taking your Breakfast Up a Notch** with Amanda Zimlich – Otters Pond Bed and Breakfast

**Description:** *As an inn keeper, providing a delicious, scratch-made hot breakfast can be the critical factor of a guest having an excellent stay versus an unremarkable one. So how do we wow guests with breakfast these days?*

**Bio:** Amanda graduated with a Bachelor of Professional Studies Degree in Hospitality Management from the Culinary Institute of America New York. She went on to hone her craft as a professional chef in fine dining at Barking Frog at Willows Lodge & Spa in Woodinville, and Madison Park Café in Seattle. Amanda transitioned to food product development, where for over a decade she directed product development teams for global food brands including Campbell Soup Company and McDonalds. She has designed over 100 branded food products literally from soup to nuts in US, Canada, Australia, China and Europe. She is officially done with corporate bureaucracy and enjoys hiding in her inn on a remote island on the Salish Sea with her animals and partner.

**What Makes your Inn Unique – Wowing Your Guests** with Casey Cozzens - ResNexus

**Description:** *Does your property have that special something that keeps your guests coming back? With any business it's not necessarily what we sell, but how we serve. We will discuss how successful businesses large or small can develop important touchpoints that keep brand loyalty and spread word-of-mouth advertising.*

**Bio:** See prior description

#### Session Two: Tuesday

**Food Safety, the Food Code, and B&B's** – With Susan Shelton – Washington Department of Health and Safety

**Description:** *Have you always wanted to ask questions about Washington's Food Code? Now's your chance. This workshop will explain the key concepts in the state food safety rule, review several recent*

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*changes with that became effective this year, and provide tips to help make your food service safer. Questions from the audience will be encouraged.*

**Bio:** Susan is a public health advisor with the Washington Department of Health Food Safety Program. She has worked in public health at the state and local level since 2000 as an educator, inspector, and program supervisor. She is currently program lead for produce safety, multi-location consistency, and the state food service rule revision and interpretation. In addition to facilitating a statewide retail food advisory group, Susan regularly provides trainings to regulators, industry, and the public.

**Taking Care of Yourself – Can You Really Do It? Of Course You Can!** – with Pat Ford - The Hideaway Lodge Bed and Breakfast

**Description:** *If you are anything like lots of people I know, you don't take time to take care of yourself, even though you need to do so to be healthy, happy and best at whatever you choose to do. This workshop will provide you with some suggestions/tips/tools for caring for your personal well-being and keeping your inn at the high level you want to maintain!*

**Bio:** Pat has been an educator for most of her adult life! She started as a classroom teacher but has spent most of her career in Adult Education. She spent over 15 years as Area Director, workshop creator and facilitator for an organization focused on helping individual get the most out of their experiences in life. She finished her career as Director of Adult Development for Girl Scouts of Western Washington. She approaches the workshops and seminars she facilitates with a strong belief that the best learning comes from everyone who is involved in a session, not just from the facilitator. Be prepared to be involved in this session.

**Using Newsletters and Blogging to Market Your Inn** with Theresa Regnier – Carson Ridge Luxury Cabins

**Description:** *No matter how many rooms your B&B has it matters that you, or your marketing team, sends out blogs and newsletters. In this workshop Theresa will share her learned knowledge from the hospitality industry, and how to find or create the latest excursion(s) for your marketing content that best fits your targeted audience.*

**Bio:** Raised on a cattle and grain farm in Colorado, which Theresa lovingly calls “the first Montessori School ever”, she brings a sense of humor to the bed and breakfast industry from all the similarities she finds between the two industries.

She moved to Washington in 2015 when she and her husband, Richard bought the Carson Ridge Luxury Cabins. With a 30-year career in marketing and brand promotion Theresa easily filled the marketing needs that their property required. A bit reluctantly at first, but once she found marketing companies that understood her request to market beyond “filling beds” the stars aligned.

She now enjoys scouting out new excursions for the blogs/newsletters content, promoting the cabin's private label wine – Friendship Pinot Gris, and gardening their botanical grounds.