

**"Women Take Charge – Powerfully Accommodating"**  
First in a profile series of Women Hotel Executives

Hotel Interactive's Bettina Marks speaks with Janna Morrison of Choice Hotels International

"Women are a perfect fit for the hospitality industry," says Janna Morrison, Senior Vice President, Customer Care and Technology Services at Choice Hotels International, whose career with the chain began in their marketing department of their Phoenix offices in 1987, after she graduated from Iowa State University. "We're naturally skilled at nurturing, multi-tasking, in communicating and working in a team setting."

Morrison is currently poised to lead the company in its new initiative with its focus on customer care and technology from this freshly created position which she assumed in December of last year.

According to Charles A. Ledsinger, Jr., President and CEO of Choice Hotels International, "Janna brings to Choice her extensive cross-functional knowledge. During her 19 years here, she's served in a variety of functional areas including marketing, revenue management, property systems, franchise services and now customer care and technology services. This cross-functional knowledge and strong relationship with our franchisees have been extremely beneficial in driving forward key initiatives."

One of her key initiatives at Choice has been to encourage the career growth of its women employees. Because Morrison feels that women are less inclined to ask for help and often don't have the visibility to be "tested," and don't usually have the professional network that men do, which may be why they haven't received the recognition that they should, she launched the Women's Business Alliance of Choice Hotels with the AH&LA. Its objective is to provide a framework for a professional network and enrichment – to provide educational resources, topics of importance to franchisees, and to offer a scholarship targeted to women who are looking to enhance their education in the hospitality industry. The Council was launched in May 2005 and is comprised of more than a dozen high-ranking executives of major lodging companies.

"Janna Morrison is undeniably a role model not only to the women who serve with her on the Women's Business Alliance, but also to all of the women here at Choice. She was instrumental in the creation of the WBA scholarship program. And it was Janna who convinced the Choice Hotels Foundation Board to increase the scholarship program's funding so that we could give out five scholarships each year instead of just one," says Maria D'Ambrosio, Manager of Diversity and Corporate Engagements at Choice.

"I believe that we're all personally in charge of our own destiny," says Morrison. While she was in Phoenix she took "ownership" of her learning and absorbed everything, "like a sponge," she says, from the IT department, which increased her value to the company from being a specialist to a generalist, which she believes ultimately is more important – seeing the big picture. She presented a proposal, knowing it was the "future," to introduce automated revenue systems at each property which was an rpm (rev par maximizer).

This exemplifies Morrison's character and strategy; she's motivated and goal oriented – her formula? – take the initiative, add your belief, plus commitment, plus people. She moved from Director of Information Systems to Vice President after she took the initiative.

According to Ledsinger, Janna's leadership style is "Direct, engaging, supportive, and constructive. She's an interactive leader with excellent communication skills. She's passionate about creating a positive 'can do' environment, which is one reason she builds such effective teams, both within her own department and within cross-functional settings."

Morrison credits her strong Mid-Western upbringing with its core values and work ethic and both parents who were successful academics as role models as a positive foundation for her success. They "set the bar high" for her, imparting their own, "There is nothing you cannot do if you work hard enough for it attitude," upon her.

"Janna is the type of leader who focuses on the solutions, not the problems. This is because she's so driven for results," says Ledsinger.

"The biggest challenge I've found over the years is achieving life balance or harmony. In particular, it's always a challenge having a role that involves significant travel, especially when you have kids," says Morrison. She is married and has two children, a 10 year old son and a seven year old daughter. Her husband is a software developer, whose more versatile schedule has enabled her to take the time she needed to travel and/or dedicate to her job at Choice.

"Ms. Morrison's openness with regard to the challenges women face has made it easier for the women of Choice to find a successful path here. She has provided helpful guidance to many of us," says Pat Murphy, Vice President, Organizational, Development, Diversity and Learning.

"I think you need all different approaches and insights from a variety of people to truly be a successful organization. That's why I've installed a true commitment to diversity throughout Choice Hotels and especially among the executive ranks. The more diverse population you have making and implementing decisions, the better able you are to adapt to the ever changing and more sophisticated needs of franchisees and guests," says CEO, Ledsinger, Jr.

Fiona Dias, Senior Vice President of Circuit City Stores, Inc. has been serving on the Board of Choice since 2004, assuming Barbara Bainum's position. Choice is formidably represented in many departments by women Vice Presidents, according to their spokesperson. Morrison, however, is their most Senior Executive.

She describes her new role as "relationship management," orchestrating the awesome franchisees, products and brands that comprise their new focus on customer care and technology. She will continue to act as liaison to the franchisees while assuming responsibility for Choices' global call center operations, including Choices' Privilege service center, Choice's property systems support and its centralized revenue management.

She is very excited about providing the best in guest care which in turn drives loyalty and is launching unique initiatives that will "profile" the guest prior to arrival in order to provide them with the best service.

"Her day begins at 5:30 a.m. with 30-45 minutes of exercise, followed by a quick breakfast of tea and oatmeal while watching the news. Before running out the door at 7, she wakes her kids, commutes to work (if she's in town), spends much of the day on the phone, the computer and in meetings and manages to get home to her family by 7:15 on most nights.

Anyone who knows Janna will tell you that her energy is unparalleled," says Ledsinger. "She has brought that energy to the table no matter what task she's undertaken while at Choice. And that attitude is truly contagious. She has an enthusiasm for work, our franchisees and our associates that is second to none."

Choice Hotels International has never been better positioned. They're on the right track and moving forward. "We expect Janna's new focus will reap untold results and benefits for our franchisees, our guests and the company," says Ledsinger.