

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Connect Expo Expands Its Reach

ATLANTA, June 12, 2018— Following the successful inaugural launch of Connect Expo Leadership Summit, Connect announces the second annual Expo Leadership Summit to take place at the Westin Hapuna Beach Resort in Hawaii, May 21-23, 2019. “As we look to broaden our reach, we are committed to achieving more diversity in all that we do,” said Steven Hacker, executive director of Connect Expo. “We value diversity in nonprofit association communities and will strive to achieve more balance in ethnicities, color and gender.”

“The Expo Leadership Summit is a great example of what we stand for—making meaningful connections by bringing together the top level organizers and suppliers,” said Chris Collinson, president of Connect. “Everyone leaves the event with the ability to make our industry even stronger.”

An intimate, selective group of organizers and suppliers attended Connect Expo on May 23-24, 2018. The two-day event featured education sessions, networking events and roundtables. Sessions were self-directed and included topics, such as “Identifying Emerging Industry Trends” and “The Impact of AI on the Events Industry.”

“I was extremely impressed with the Connect Expo Leadership Summit. The event was well-executed,” said Mark White, senior vice president of sales at Visit Salt Lake. “And most importantly, the networking and content shared among the senior level participants was pertinent and valuable.”

“Connect Expo Leadership Summit in Hawaii was an incredible opportunity to network and share best practices with industry experts and develop new relationships in a beautiful environment,” said Mike Grant of Reed Exhibitions. “I found it truly rewarding and came away with valuable ideas and new business contacts. A great event!”

Those in attendance included:

**Organizers:**

Mike Carlucci	Clarion
Marty Glynn	MAD Event Management LLC
Elena Grant	Taffy Event Strategies
Mike Grant	Reed Exhibitions
Lori Jenks	Emerald Expositions
Tom Mitchell	Messe Dusseldorf North America

**Suppliers:**

Tiffany Andrews	Myrtle Beach Convention Center
Aaron Bludworth	Fern
Paul Buchheit	MGM Resorts International
Ed Coffey	Reno Tahoe USA
Chuck Elias	Sciensio (Eventbot)

# Connect

Bruno Giaccio  
Mark White

MetroMultimedia  
Visit Salt Lake

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Steven Hacker, former president of the International Association of Exhibitions and Events, took part in this year's event as both moderator and the new executive director of Connect Expo. "As far as Connect is concerned, we don't distinguish between the value of suppliers and planners," said Hacker. "They are co-equals and together contribute to successful events."

If you are interested in being considered for next year's event, contact Vice President of Sales Matt Johnson at [mjohnson@connectmeetings.com](mailto:mjohnson@connectmeetings.com).

## **ABOUT CONNECT**

Connect is a leader in the meetings, events, travel and tourism industry. Specializing in destination marketing, the company produces digital programs, online and mobile solutions, meetings business and travel magazines, trade shows and consumer events, travel guides for newspapers and leisure magazines and destination information, which is distributed through broadcast and custom programs. Connect, formerly known as Collinson Media & Events, introduced the popular Marketplace format to the meetings industry and now produces national shows for meeting planners in the Corporate, Expo, Sports, Diversity, Association and Faith sectors as well as other state- and region-specific meetings- and hospitality-focused events. More information about the company's brands and services is available at [connectmeetings.com](http://connectmeetings.com).