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Sheraton Grand Chicago Names Cat Carter Director of Sales & Marketing

Promotion Comes in Tandem with Proven Track Record

Chicago, IL – June 7, 2016 – Cat Carter has been named complex director of sales and marketing at the Sheraton Grand Chicago and Westin Chicago River North, highly-regarded 1,200 and 400-plus room properties in the heart of downtown Chicago bordering the newly reinvigorated Chicago River Esplanade. Most recently the director of sales at the Sheraton Grand Chicago, Carter's well-deserved promotion comes as no surprise given her impressive track record during her tenure at the hotel.

In her new role Carter will oversee a team of more than two dozen directors, managers and associates, with an emphasis on maximizing topline revenue and implementing strategic marketing campaigns to complement the team's sales efforts on both the national and local levels. Boasting the largest ballroom in the Midwest, Sheraton Grand Chicago is known to host many high-profile groups and conventions, which Carter and team have been instrumental in securing and impressing. A more intimate venue, the Westin Chicago River North offers unique, water front meeting spaces ideal for groups up to 300 guests and will introduce 320 RiverBar this June with impressive views spanning from river to skyline. Carter will also be overseeing the newly formed River East Collection, an newly formed alliance of six area hotels that give groups too small for McCormick Place, yet too large for one hotel, a fantastic option to make meeting in Chicago a reality. While these groups – ranging from 1,500 to 2,800 attendees – might have previously taken a pass on Chicago, they now have a viable solution to make for a successful meeting.

"Cat has done an exceptional job with us, earning the respect of clients and her team alike," said Mark Lauer, general manager of Sheraton Grand Chicago. "This is a truly well-deserved promotion and we are confident that Cat will continue to surpass goals and add tremendous value here at the Sheraton Grand Chicago. She has been instrumental in propelling us to the top of our competitive set."

Before joining the Sheraton Grand Chicago team Carter was the director of sales and marketing at The Westin Georgetown in Washington, D.C. Carter's exceptional work ethic was recognized by the hotel's ownership group in 2013 with the Best Associate Satisfaction Award. The following year the property was number one in forecasting accuracy in its region. Carter consistently hit or exceeded goals, as well as customer satisfaction with multiple nods as "Best in Class" from Starvoice, which recognizes employee excellence within Starwood Hotels. Carter has a long-standing career within Starwood Hotels & Resorts having held various positions at The Westin Alexandria, Business Travel Managed Account Team for properties in DC and Virginia and The Westin Arlington Gateway. She was a member of the Starwood GPS Council from 2012 to 2014 providing, feedback and piloting special new projects at the corporate level.

Carter's passion for travel and the industry was ingrained in her early on; she knew this was her calling by the time she entered kindergarten. As a child, Carter lived in Egypt, Greece and Bermuda, developing passion for exploring different destinations and learning about various cultures. Her entire family has roots in the tourism industry; Carter's father, Dr. Don Hawkins, is the founder of the International Institute of Tourism Studies at George Washington University, a highly regarded program and where Carter studied. Carter was recognized as one of the "Top 40 under 40" hospitality professionals in Connect by a leading industry publication in July 2011. She served as the Community Outreach Chair for Society of Government Meeting Planners, where she helped to strategize and further develop group business within this sector.

Carter received both her Bachelor of Business Administration and her Masters of Tourism Administration from The George Washington University School of Business. An avid volunteer, Carter has lent her time to both food banks and local schools. She lives in Chicago with her husband and 11-year old daughter.

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The Sheraton Grand Chicago, which is ideally situated on the Chicago River within walking distance of Navy Pier, fabulous Michigan Avenue shopping, Millennium Park, the Loop business district and more, has long been a Windy City favorite based on its location alone. The hotel's 1,218 guestrooms and suites are now completely renovated, boasting spectacular river, lake and skyline views, alongside Sheraton's ultra-comfortable Sweet Sleeper^(SM) bed; outstanding accommodations to compliment the hotel's fantastic location.

One of the most popular features of the hotel is the Sheraton Club Lounge, a special privilege reserved for those staying in one of the hotel's Club Rooms or suites. The bi-level lounge serves complimentary continental breakfast, evening hors d'oeuvres, as well as light bites and snacks throughout the day. The panoramic views of the city skyline make this a fantastic setting for gatherings with friends and family. Television, high-speed Internet access and workstations equipped with both a PC and Mac, round out the offerings at the Sheraton Club Lounge. For more information on Sheraton Grand Chicago, please visit www.sheratonchicago.com.

Operated by Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. (NYSE: HOT), The Westin Chicago River North offers 429 guest rooms and suites, more than 30,000 square feet of flexible meeting space and two additional food and beverage outlets: 320 RESTAURANT AND BAR and Kamehachi Sushi Bar. The hotel is a short stroll from the upscale boutiques along Chicago's Magnificent Mile, Chicago Theater, the Civic Opera House and a variety of world-class restaurants, night clubs and bars. Nearby attractions including Field Museum, Shedd Aquarium, Art Institute of Chicago and Wrigley Field – home of the legendary Chicago Cubs baseball team.

Westin Hotels & Resorts, like all brands within Starwood's robust portfolio, is proud to offer the Starwood Preferred Guest[®] program, which made headlines when it launched in 1999 with a breakthrough policy of no blackout dates on Free Night Awards. SPG[®] offers members the ability to redeem awards at more resorts, more luxury properties, more European hotels and more golf properties than any other hotel program. For more information on Westin Chicago River North, please visit www.westinchicago.com.