



Discover Puerto Rico Announces Brad Dean’s Departure as CEO; Dean to Lead Explore St. Louis

San Juan, Puerto Rico, January 15, 2025 – Discover Puerto Rico today announced that Brad Dean, the first CEO of the Island’s Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), will be stepping down from his role to take on a new opportunity as President and CEO of Explore St. Louis, the city’s official Destination Marketing Organization, effective February 2025. Dean’s leadership has been instrumental in establishing and positioning Puerto Rico as a leading global travel destination.

“The past seven years guiding the establishment and growth of Discover Puerto Rico has been more than a job - it has been a mission. I am extremely proud of the incredible team and rich culture we have built within the DMO. Together with public and private partners, we exceeded all expectations for what our organization could achieve. It has been my honor to represent this special destination and its promising tourism industry. I am confident Discover Puerto Rico will continue to set the industry standard in innovative and results-focused sales and marketing.” said Brad Dean, CEO of Discover Puerto Rico.

Since leading the opening of Discover Puerto Rico in 2018, Dean has spearheaded transformative initiatives that have driven unprecedented growth in the Island’s tourism industry. Under his leadership, Puerto Rico’s tourism sector has consistently achieved new heights:

- **Tourism Growth:** Since 2021, Puerto Rico’s tourism industry has broken its own performance records year after year, including visitors, visitor spending, lodging revenue, room tax, and demand for overnight stays. Comparing the year before the establishment of Discover Puerto Rico to 2023 reveals remarkable growth:
 - 51% more visitors from abroad (Tourism Economics)
 - 50% more lodging demand (AirDNA and STR)
 - 56% more visitor spending (Tourism Economics)
 - 88% higher room tax revenues (Puerto Rico Tourism Company)



- 52% more visitor arrivals (Aerostar)
- Economic Impact: Puerto Rico's tourism industry experienced a boost in economic contribution, supporting local businesses and creating thousands of jobs. By October 2024, the Island achieved a record 101,300 leisure and hospitality jobs, a 6% increase over the previous year, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Global Recognition: Puerto Rico has garnered international recognition as a top travel destination, earning accolades from prestigious outlets such as *The New York Times*' "52 Places to Go," *Travel + Leisure*'s "World's Best Awards," and *Condé Nast Traveler*'s "Readers' Choice Awards." Additionally, Discover Puerto Rico was named to *Fast Company*'s list of "World's Most Innovative Companies" in 2023.
- Marketing Transformation: Dean championed the launch of the award-winning "Live Boricua" campaign, redefining Puerto Rico's brand identity and creating a deeper connection with travelers worldwide.
- Leadership Through Challenges: Brad guided Discover Puerto Rico through the aftermath of multiple challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the Island's tourism sector adapted and thrived in changing conditions. As a result, the destination appeared in the "Study on the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Travel and Tourism Industry," published in 2023 by the U.S. Department of Commerce. This study reveals that Puerto Rico led the United States' post-pandemic recovery, with +85% growth compared to 2019.

In recognition of his exceptional leadership, Dean was named State Tourism Director of the Year in 2021 by the U.S. Travel Association, recognizing his outstanding achievements in directing Discover Puerto Rico and his contributions to the Island's remarkable recovery after Hurricane Maria. Dean was also honored as Executive of the Year at the 2022 Travvy Awards, which recognize leaders and organizations that innovate and inspire within the tourism industry.

"Brad's leadership has been instrumental in shaping the success of Discover Puerto Rico and the Island's tourism industry. We are incredibly grateful for his contributions and wish him all the best in his new role," said José M. Suárez, Chairman of the Discover Puerto Rico board of directors. "As we move forward, the foundation Brad built will continue to guide



our efforts as we embrace new opportunities and innovate to keep Puerto Rico top of mind for travelers worldwide."

As Discover Puerto Rico moves forward, the organization remains committed to building on Dean's legacy, continuing its mission to showcase the Island's unique offerings, and driving sustainable tourism growth. The DMO's Executive Committee will immediately begin the process of identifying and selecting a new president and CEO.

For additional information, please contact: communications@discoverpuertorico.com

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About Discover Puerto Rico

Discover Puerto Rico is a private, not-for-profit Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) whose mission is to make Puerto Rico visible to the world as a premier travel destination. The DMO brings prosperity to the people of Puerto Rico by collaboratively promoting the Island's diversity and uniqueness for leisure and business travel, and events. It is responsible for all global marketing, sales, and promotion of the destination and works collaboratively with key local governmental and nongovernmental players throughout Puerto Rico's visitor economy and the community at large, to empower economic growth. To discover all the beauty the Island has to offer, visit DiscoverPuertoRico.com.