



hihotels honors eight leaders with 121 years of combined service, highlighting long-term dedication to franchise growth and strong company culture. Left to right: Paul Vakharia, Pat Cheedie, Penny Duelk, Vic Vescovo, Gary Gobin, Helen Somphone, Frank Sweeney, Chris Guimbellot

HOSPITALITY

hihotels celebrates 121 years of collective leadership and service

By Titiana Rokou
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ATLANTA, GA – hihotels by Hospitality International, Inc. honor eight long-standing company leaders whose combined tenure totals an impressive 121 years. As Paul Vakharia celebrates his 25th anniversary as Senior Director of Franchise Development for the Northeast Region, the company also recognizes the dedicated service of other team members who have also played pivotal roles in hihotels' growth and the continued success of its franchisees.

Additional honorees include:

- Chhaya Patel, Franchise Development Coordinator – 25 years
- Helen Somphone, Vice President of Finance – 20 years
- Chris Guimbellot, President and CEO – 15 years
- Frank Sweeney, Director of Distribution & Digital Marketing – 10 years
- Bridget Lohnes, Creative Services Manager – 10 years

- Gary Gobin, Director of Operations – 8 years
- Penny Duell, Director, Assurance & Marketing Program – 8 years

"This kind of long-term commitment is rare in today's business world, and it's a testament to the type of culture we've built at hihotels," said **Chris Guimbellot**, President and CEO. "Our leadership team is deeply invested in the company's mission and the success of our franchisees. We empower each other to lead with integrity, innovate with confidence, and serve with heart. That's the foundation of our long-standing stability."

hihotels fosters a lean, flexible structure that values initiative and encourages independent decision-making within each department. This trust-based approach has enabled leaders to take ownership of their roles and build meaningful, lasting relationships with franchisees across the company's five economy brands: **Scottish Inns, Red Carpet Inn, Master Hosts Inns, Downtowner Inns**, and **Passport Inn**.

"It has been a privilege to be part of an organization where every voice matters," Paul Vakharia shared. "Over 25 years, I've seen firsthand how our collaborative, family-like culture helps franchisees thrive. We don't just build businesses – we build relationships."

The leadership team's collective experience has been instrumental in navigating industry changes, enhancing brand value, and delivering consistent support to hihotels' nationwide network of properties. Regular strategy sessions and open lines of communication ensure that every team member contributes to forward-looking solutions that benefit the entire system.

"Our longevity comes from a shared commitment – to each other, to our values, and most importantly, to the hotel owners we serve," added Guimbellot.