



“The fourth signature event that we have is the Caribbean Hotel Investment Conference and Operations Summit that’s held in November. That’s done primarily by a company called HVS and we, along with the Caribbean Tourism Organization, are host sponsors, as well. Those make up the bulk of our major activities and events.”

How else do you communicate with the membership?

“We probably communicate with them about four or five times a week. We try to balance it so we don’t over-communicate, but we have various ways. We do webinars, email, and social media. At our Caribbean Travel Marketplace, we had over nine million social media hits on that event; it was quite exciting to see that kind of engagement.”

The Great Recession harmed tourism pretty much everywhere, but particularly in the Caribbean. What does the landscape look like for the industry over the next several years, and how do you see the Association continuing to be a viable voice for the sec-

tor?

“We just completed our first annual ‘Industry Performance and Outlook Study.’ The findings really showed that we’re continuing on an upward path that started about three years ago for the region as an aggregate. Some destinations did okay during the Recession, some struggled quite a bit, and some came out of it earlier than others. Collectively, the region really came out of it about three years ago, and we’ve seen a good upward trend line. More than half the hotels reported strong to moderate performance in 2015. With increased occupancies and arrivals, most hotels also increased their employment rolls. So there was some robust hiring, last year.

“Also, one of the things that happened during the Recession is we saw a retrenchment in capital expenditures. We’re starting to see people coming out of that, and last year, they came out of it quite significantly. So, capital expenditures and investments in hotel properties were up, last year, and are projected to increase in 2016. The profit picture is a little unsettling, yet, in part because of people still struggling. There are a lot of back payments and things that were put on hold.