

Letter Dated June 8, 2020

Recipients: All 2019 & 2020 Board Members

Dear Former & Current GBTA Board Members:

We collectively as former & current GBTA staff members are writing this letter to bring to your attention the working environment, business irregularities and unethical conduct under the leadership of Scott Solombrino and Lisa Censullo.

The staff both current and former have been subjected to fear tactics such as but not limited to threat of lawsuits, termination, retaliation, verbal abuse, harassment and emotional duress, all of which have led to an extreme toxic environment at GBTA.

While we have a GBTA 2020 handbook outlining policies surrounding harassment (verbal and/or non-verbal), sexual harassment, equal employment opportunity policy, and anti-discrimination, the reality is that these protections are not applied at GBTA. As documented in GBTA 2020 handbook, retaliation and or discrimination against an employee who files a complaint of harassment or assist in any manner of investigation are strictly prohibitive and will not be tolerated. Any employee who engages in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action and subject to termination. This policy mechanism afforded to GBTA employees is not possible due to the constant threat of retaliation from Scott Solombrino which would ultimately result in job loss and or legal action.

The following are samples for the case in point of policy infractions and what GBTA staff endure and have endured in the workplace:

- 1) Racist, divisive and derogatory comments such like Chinese are murderers, this is a Chinese disease, they (Chinese) are killing everyone as it relates to COVID, Canadians and Europeans don't count, Mexico is dirty, Mexicans are thieves, etc. Scott Solombrino refuses to travel to Mexico because he has proclaimed that "the Mexican cartels will kidnap him because he is important and they would be out to get him", nor will he allow Lisa Censullo to travel to assist with the conference. GBTA staff represent various global regions thereby comments of this nature have not only offended staff but have also created a sense of disenfranchisement.
- 2) Misogynist attitude and rhetoric such as Scott declaring that we need to put men on the Winit board because they are smart, women don't know how to manage technology, so on and so on.
- 3) Derogatory comments about past and present board members, staff, vendors, GBTA members and media. No party is immune to his tirades. Consistent and almost daily comments directed to the staff suchlike you are crazy, you are insane, you are stupid, idiot, you are boring, you are all miserable, if you video record meetings you will be sued, he declares he is a vengeful person, excessive use of profanity, and staff forewarned that he and Lisa will be the last ones to turn the lights off at GBTA, so on and so on. We have been subject to other comments suchlike, "Don't you feel sorry for me?" "You don't know how hard my job is?" "You all don't understand what I am going through" and more. Brings up politics and trashes politicians frequently. Derogatory comments about the regional boards and partners emphasizing that they do not matter as they have no power to make decisions. The staff cannot intervene when any of these comments or directed tirades occur as they will result in a personal attack by Scott to the person who has intervened. Staff have observed that there is never any intervention by the number 2 (Lisa Censullo) to stop any of the inappropriate tirades.
- 4) Constant proclamation by Scott that this organization (GBTA) is not a democracy, he declares "I don't care about your opinions" and that he makes all the decisions with no consideration that this is a board managed association that he answers to. Scott Solombrino constantly proclaims that "they (board) don't care and they let

me do whatever I want." Why is the board sanctioning this behavior and his actions based upon its fiduciary responsibility to the organization, staff and membership?

- 5) Four African American women were fired on the week of June 1st on the heels of an announcement that a new VP of Communications would be hired and that more layoffs are possible. In light of the current protests this sends a wrong message of diversity and inclusion. What does each board members employer adhere to in relation to diversity and inclusion policies? Do these recent actions fall in line with your companies' policies and did you sanction this decision?
- 6) Severance was withheld for all laid off employees. Pre-covid Scott Solombrino acknowledged and confirmed to the staff that the board approved the 2019 bonuses, but they were never released. Why was the money not distributed to the staff if it had already been approved?
- 7) GBTA has endured a higher than average staff turnover ratio since Scott Solombrino was appointed to the role. Many of the staff who left of their own accord did so in part because of the toxic working environment he created coupled with his actions.
- 8) During an all staff meeting Scott Solombrino went on a tirade about a BTN article (dated May 4th, 2020) that he was promoted to CEO and called out the former executive salary of nearly 1 million dollars. The staff assumption is that Scott's salary is similar to if not higher than his predecessor. In the article a GBTA spokesperson commented that aspects of Scott's compensation have been deferred until there is a resolution to the Covid-19 crisis. If staff approved bonuses were withheld, then how are his benefits and compensation deferred in light of all of the recent layoffs and our financial situation? The same applies to Lisa Censulo.
- 9) Scott Solombrino uses a personal email address to conduct GBTA business because he claims that his personal Yahoo server cannot be accessed in case of legal action. Did the board sanction this policy? The optics of using a personal address could imply impropriety and non-transparency.
- 10) Scott Solombrino has vehemently refused to give refunds to Exhibitors, Sponsors and Registration for all 2020 events. Scott declared, "they can sue me if they want a refund and that no one is getting their monies back." Lisa Censullo is enforcing this decision. Staff have been directed to deny refunds and credits and cannot put anything in writing to any customer. This has put staff in an untenable position of lying to customers and damaging relationships especially with customers who may have a legal right to a refund. Scott Solombrino has declared that this was discussed with the board and the ALC and that both parties are in agreement.
- 11) GBTA staff are fielding questions from all vendors that are owed monies. Scott declared the we will not be paying any outstanding invoices once again putting staff in a precarious position.
- 12) Is GBTA spending member monies prudently? For instance:
Scott Solombrino delcared that he is not required in his contract to be in the office for more than 140 business days. GBTA is paying for his travel, flights, hotels, and incidental meals each week to and from Boston. This is all board approved.
Scott Solombrino declared that Lisa Censullo would be moving to Virginia when she joined us but instead GBTA is paying for her weekly travel, flight, hotel and meal incidentals.
Board meetings are held at 5-star hotels along with expensive meals.
Scott Solombrino has directed that he, Lisa Censullo and the board members business travel be booked only at luxury hotels such as the St Regis. Included in this direction is that the board is to get whatever they want in particular expensive meals, business class flights, luxury hotels, etc.

GBTA Staff on the other hand were instructed by Scott Solombrino to "spend GBTA money like it were your own". He directed that we could not expense a cup of coffee because it will not be approved. There is a dichotomy between leadership and staff expenditures.

- 13) Scott Solombrino will only contract with one hotel chain as a strategic partner. This is a self-servicing decision as it benefits his rewards status and is not aligned with the interest of the GBTA members we serve. Is this not considered a conflict of interest?
- 14) As per the GBTA 2020 handbook, an actual potential conflict of interest occurs when an officer or employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that individual or family member as a result of GBTA's business dealings. Personal gain may result not only in cases where an officer, employee or family member has a significant ownership in a firm with which GBTA does business. GBTA contracts with DAV El Boston Coach for ground transportation for Scott, Lisa and the Board without this going to RFP. We understand that Scott's sons work at the company and Scott may still have financial ties to DAV El which is a conflict of interest.

Here are some questions and actions that the GBTA board must consider:

- 1) Stop any further layoffs and reorganization until an investigation is conducted by a third party into the working environment, harassment, business irregularities and unethical conduct as outlined above.
- 2) It is of utmost importance that the board protect the staff and we ask that the board instruct both Scott Solombrino and Lisa Censullo to not contact the staff until a full unbiased investigation has been conducted and completed by the board and a legal third party that is not currently retained by GBTA. The staff both former and current fear retribution, scare tactics, interrogation, intimidation, legal action and overall harassment from Scott Solombrino and Lisa Censullo to uncover the sources of this document. The board has a fiduciary duty to investigate these claims and provide a safe and positive working environment for all.
- 3) By policy the board approves all expenses, hence we request a review by a third party of Scott Solombrino, Lisa Censullo and the board activity to ensure proper spending and accountability to GBTA members and staff.
- 4) Explanation as to how and why Scott Solombrino was hired when the board was familiar with his behavior as he has 20 + years of experience with board members.
- 5) Can you provide evidence that a proper search was fully conducted for Scott's position?
- 6) GBTA Staff were advised by Scott Solombrino that he was hiring a number two and that she would be on board soon. GBTA Staff were advised of this person's qualifications (Lisa Censullo) before the job description was briefly posted. Why was a proper search for a position in the salary range of \$250,000.00 - \$350,000 not conducted?
- 7) The board needs to ask itself that if they had an employee within their own organization that conducted themselves in the manner outlined in this letter and as witnessed by all staff would they still be employed? Hence, we ask for the removal of both Scott Solombrino and Lisa Censullo from GBTA to restore a safe, productive and non-toxic working environment which benefits the staff and the GBTA membership.

We passionately implore the GBTA board members to investigate not only the working environment and treatment of staff at GBTA but also its management practices. As past and present employees we are powerless and therefore vulnerable to the actions of a leader that the board has appointed. We are gravely concerned that the continued degradation of the organization by the current

leadership will ultimately lead to its demise. We request that through a proper investigation that change will be initiated quickly to ensure a positive and safe working environment for all GBTA staff.

In the recent words of Tim Cook from Apple, "To create change, we have to re-examine our own views and actions in light of a pain that is deeply felt but too often ignored. Issues of human dignity will not abide standing on the sidelines." So we as past and present employees of GBTA ask you the board members "Where do you stand? And what action will you take to rectify this?"

In closing, if no expeditious action is taken by the board to the extent that there is no response and or action taken by the board after being put on notice of these business irregularities, harassment and unethical conduct future litigation against the board and GBTA management individually and collectively may be pursued.

Sincerely,

GBTA Former and Current Staff