

BLACKLANE

UPGRADE YOUR TRAVELS

Christle Johnson, CCTE, GLP, GTP
Chairperson
Global Business Travel Association
1101 King Street, Suite 500
Alexandria, VA 22314
USA

Berlin, 17 January 2020

GBTA Convention 2020 Withdrawal

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Last month, we first saw the video of Scott Solombrino's session, "[The State Of The Limousine Industry](#)," at Limo University's LABLive conference in Nashville, Tennessee on January 21, 2019. The panel revealed multiple instances where Mr. Solombrino's positions contradict our values, GBTA's priorities, and, frankly, civil discourse.

Our new understanding of Mr. Solombrino's intolerance and incivility gives us no choice. We must withdraw from exhibiting at the GBTA Convention 2020. We see our exhibition booth and the financial commitment behind it as affirmations of Mr. Solombrino, especially with the Convention's theme of "Together." We cannot in good faith stand by him as a representative of the business travel industry at the show.

Specifically, we oppose his statements from the panel:

- "For all of the people who don't like Donald Trump, you know, go s--t in your hat." (54:36)
- "And all the crazy broads protesting yesterday, 'We hate Trump.' Yeah, you don't have a job because of him, you lunatics. Crazy people!" (54:48)
- "There's (sic) other ways to nickel and dime people in contracts. I mean, you become an expert at it if you do a couple of them." (52:21)

We understand that Mr. Solombrino spoke as President and Chief Executive Officer of Dav El/Boston Coach Chauffeured Transportation Network. However, he simultaneously served as President of the GBTA Allied Leadership Council and a member of GBTA's Board of Directors. Only three months after these crass comments, he became GBTA's Executive Director and COO.

Mr. Solombrino's contempt for those with rival political views hinders GBTA's advocacy and networking abilities. Furthermore, his belittling language about Women's March participants counters GBTA's efforts to support all women in the industry.

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In a [November GBTA announcement](#), Mr. Solombrino stated, "Fostering an environment of inclusion and diversity in the global business travel industry is of paramount importance to GBTA and our member companies." We agree. His off-script views from January, however, cause us to question his personal commitment to this priority.

Mr. Solombrino's pricing perspective appears at odds with GBTA's goals, too. The [organization's website](#) says, "GBTA advocates for an open and competitive business travel marketplace that allows for pricing transparency." Blacklane also holds this view.

Yet in the same panel, Mr. Solombrino called Blacklane "clowns" and "dopes" for supporting pricing transparency in ground transportation (52:44). We welcome open competition and brush off juvenile name-calling. We also expect companies to contrast their business practices from ours. Our concern is that Mr. Solombrino now represents a pricing approach that he mocked last year.

While we are canceling our 2020 booth, we continue to support the great work of the GBTA worldwide, GBTA local chapters, and volunteers who tirelessly improve business travel for the benefit of the entire industry.

We regret that Mr. Solombrino's views undermine and overshadow their great work. Because of those dedicated people, we are happy to keep our membership and contribute to GBTA's progress. We look forward to discussing the best ways to do that going forward.

Sincerely,



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