

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Seaborne Airlines Announces Changes In Leadership Team

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SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico -- Sea Star Holdings Inc., parent company of Seaborne Airlines on Thursday announced the appointment of Ben Munson as its acting CEO.

The leadership change comes on the heels of a [public relations disaster](#) for the company, after it decided to cancel a flight headed to St. Thomas on Saturday afternoon. Scheduled customers became irate when the airline decided that the only solution to rectify an overweight matter was to remove a passenger from the flight, even though the plane had luggage belonging to people not traveling. The customers blocked the departure area and called the police and local media. Seaborne responded by [calling the customers unruly](#), and by stating that it was evaluating legal options.

Relative to the leadership changes, Seaborne Airlines said Mr. Munson has worked in various commercial planning divisions for over 10 years. In addition to senior leadership experience at a major airline in the capacity of planning, Mr. Munson's experience is complemented with direct commercial support at numerous airlines and airports. He has been a consultant for the Seaborne team for the last two years in the commercial area of the airline, according to the release.

Taking immediate action in his new role, Mr. Munson announced a flurry of changes at the top of the company, which the release says was to ensure a successful transition and a stronger airline going forward. The changers are as follows:

Capt. Jesus Medina, chief operating officer, will be leading all operations to include flight operations, system control, maintenance and airports. Capt. Medina joined Seaborne in January 2016 as VP of flight operations. Mr. Medina has over 18 years of airline experience as pilot and as director of system operations control.

Hector (Tato) Montanez, commercial vice president, will be responsible for marketing, sales, network planning, revenue management, and reservations. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Montanez was director of business development and marketing at Seaborne, a role he assumed after joining the company in June 2014. Mr. Montanez brings more than 27 years of experience throughout the airline industry.

Olvin Valentin, vice president of people and general counsel, will lead all administrative, IT and human resources aspects of the airline as well all legal duties. Before joining the Seaborne team in 2015 as general counsel, Mr. Valentin founded Nonprofit Institute LLC to help nonprofit Puerto Rican businesses with a variety of services.

Jahallah Yearwood, controller, a 20-year Seaborne veteran, will continue to oversee all accounting and financial analysis. Mr. Yearwood began his career with Seaborne at an entry level and has grown and advanced through the ranks. He has been in the position of controller since 2006.

Susana Castro, director of safety and regulatory compliance, a role she has been performing for the last two years. Prior to her role in safety, Ms. Castro was general manager of the SJU Hub airline operation, and boasts 14 years of airline industry experience prior to joining the Seaborne team.

"I have a tremendous amount of confidence in all of them, in their capability and competence in leading their divisions and positioning the company and employees for success," Mr. Munson said.

With this new leadership in place, Seaborne will continue its dedicated service to the Caribbean destinations it serves, and is committed to improving and growing relationships throughout the region, according to the release.