



Hanna Lee Communications, Inc.  
Food, Beverage & Hospitality PR  
3 Columbus Circle, 15th floor  
New York, NY 10019  
Phone: (212) 527-9969  
[www.hannaleecommunications.com](http://www.hannaleecommunications.com)

## **Hanna Lee Communications’ Ascot Awards Application for Hanna Lee Communications’ “Hospitality Forward” Podcast**

Website: <http://www.hannaleecommunications.com/podcast>

Apple Podcasts: <https://apple.co/2Z3CdEQ>

Spotify: <https://spoti.fi/3ibdW7h>

iHeartRadio: <https://ihr.fm/2FIEynm>

### **Situation:**

#### **An Agency Serves the Hospitality & Travel Community Through a New Podcast**

In March of 2020, as the pandemic unfolded, the impact on bars, restaurants and hotels was immediate and devastating, with mandated closures and furloughs across the country. Hanna Lee Communications, which serves the hospitality and travel sectors, saw its revenues decline by 90%. Rather than retreat, the agency began brainstorming ways it could help the hospitality & travel community.

After much soul searching, the agency realized it had two major assets: a roster of hospitality & travel journalists that it has cultivated over 17 years, and an extensive network of professionals who work in these sectors: chefs, bartenders, sommeliers, travel advisors and more, who needed visibility more than ever, but did not have the resources to hire a PR agency. The question was how to bring these two worlds together for their mutual benefit and help the industry rebuild and rebound.

An idea was hatched to create the agency’s first-ever podcast, “Hospitality Forward,” where the agency’s principals, Hanna Lee and Michael Anstendig, interview travel & hospitality reporters from top media outlets across the board. These luminaries share their insights and tips for how to get their attention and, ultimately, the media spotlight. As publicists and journalists themselves, they understand the power of media exposure to change careers and lives.

With its first episode interviewing Robert Simonson, a freelancer for the New York Times, PUNCH and Imbibe, the podcast was an immediate hit, earning 5-star reviews on Apple Podcasts. Since then, we have interviewed 50 media stars that include:

1. Robert Simonson (New York Times, PUNCH, Imbibe)
2. Jeff Gordinier (Esquire)
3. Jacqueline Gifford (Travel + Leisure)

4. Rachel King (Fortune)
5. Mark Ellwood (Condé Nast Traveler, Robb Report, “Travel Genius”)
6. Kate Krader (Bloomberg Pursuits)
7. Ray Isle (Food & Wine)
8. Bao Ong (Time Out New York)
9. Jason Feifer (Entrepreneur)
10. Adam Teeter & Erica Duecy (VinePair)
11. Kara Newman (Wine Enthusiast, Wall Street Journal)
12. Shivani Vora (New York Times, CNN, Forbes)
13. Brad Japhe (Bloomberg, CNN, Wall Street Journal)
14. Charu Suri (New York Times, Architectural Digest, Condé Nast Traveler)
15. Aaron Goldfarb (Esquire, New York Times, PUNCH)
16. Kristen Bieler (SevenFifty Daily, Beverage Media)
17. Joshua M. Bernstein (New York Times, Bon Appétit, Imbibe)
18. Wendy Gillette (CBS News Radio)
19. Devorah Lev-Tov (New York Times, Thrillist, Condé Nast Traveler)
20. John McCarthy (Men’s Health, Forbes, Gear Patrol)
21. Jonah Flicker (Esquire, CNN, Robb Report)
22. Leslie Sbrocco (NBC’s “Today Show,” PBS’ “100 Drinks, Dishes & Destinations,” PBS’ “Check Please!”)
23. Sandrae Lawrence and Gary Sharpen (The Cocktail Lovers)
24. Laura Itzkowitz (Vogue, Architectural Digest, Departures)
25. David Kaplan (Adweek)
26. Susan Kostrzewa (Wine Enthusiast)
27. Katie Lockhart (National Geographic, Rachael Ray, AFAR)
28. Howie Kahn (WSJ Magazine, GQ, Travel + Leisure)
29. Amanda Schuster (Forbes, SevenFifty Daily)
30. Dan Dao (Food & Wine, Saveur, Condé Nast Traveler)
31. Elise Taylor (Vogue)
32. Jeff Wielgopolan (Forbes Travel Guide)
33. Noah Rothbaum (The Daily Beast)
34. Sean Flynn (Departures)
35. Kat Odell (Vogue, Thrillist, New York Times’ T Magazine, Eater)
36. Christopher Cameron (New York Post)
37. Kirk Miller (InsideHook)
38. Hamish Smith (Drinks International, Class Magazine)
39. Sam Dangremond (Town & Country)
40. Will Price (Gear Patrol)
41. Kathleen Squires (Wall Street Journal, Food & Wine, Saveur)
42. Wayne Curtis (The Daily Beast)
43. Tara Cox (Rachael Ray In Season)
44. David Graver (COOL HUNTING)
45. Holly Graham (DRiNK Magazine Asia)
46. Emily Saladino (Wine Enthusiast)
47. Brandon Berkson (Hotels Above Par)

48. Lilah Raptopoulos (Financial Times)
49. Kevin Sintumuang (Esquire)
50. Stacey Lastoe (Condé Nast Traveler)
51. Emily Gerard (NBC's "Today Show")

**Strategies:**

- Leverage media relations by distributing a press release to trumpet the "Hospitality Forward" Podcast
- Leverage social media marketing to promote each episode before and after it runs, including a sound bite

**Objectives:**

- Maximize the success of the "Hospitality Forward" Podcast
- Position "Hospitality Forward" Podcast as a giving back to the community initiative by Hanna Lee Communications to help its professionals gain the media's attention and coverage
- Reinforce the positioning of Hanna Lee Communications as an innovative agency that cares about the hospitality & travel community and supports it in pioneering ways, like its groundbreaking "Hospitality Forward" podcast

**Execution:**

- The agency is now in Season 2 of the podcast, with 50 additional journalists lined up to be interviewed
- Each episode is promoted extensively on social media with audio pull-quotes from the featured journalists

**Results:**

- The "Hospitality Forward" Podcast now has listeners in 93 countries around the world and has received 5-star reviews on Apple Podcasts
- As of January 2021, it has become part of the credited curriculum of the New York Institute of Technology's (NYIT) business and hospitality programs in the U.S. and Canada

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