

Business Traveler

MAY 2014

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Great Meetings 101
Dining in Brussels
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Lifestyles of the **Superloyal**

Loyalty has its
privileges – and a
stellar array of perks



Extending a Welcome

Long-term guests
want a place
more like home

Untangled Web

How close is
global connectivity
and what's next?



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A Passion for Travel

The newly promoted CEO of Preferred Hotel Group, Lindsey Ueberroth, talks luxury, points and bragging rights



BT: What is your elevator pitch for the seasoned traveler?

UEBERROTH: Preferred Hotel Group delivers unique, one of a kind properties that are authentic to each destination. Much like the destination, the hotels are an experience within themselves and when a traveler leaves, it is something that is imprinted in their hearts and minds.

BT: There is an interesting discussion thread on a social network about defining luxury. How would you characterize "Luxury"?

UEBERROTH: Luxury is very personal. Travel requires an investment of time; there are numerous choices and a wide variety of experiences. It is much more than the physical aspect and also requires amazing people, interactions, and experiences. People want to return home with "bragging rights" or cocktail conversation about their trip. It is more a result and delivering an elevated sense of positive emotions that people then love to share with others.

BT: With challenges in today's loyalty programs, how do you think frequent travelers see your iPrefer program?

UEBERROTH: We have studied this topic extensively. From airline to hotels and various aspects of traveler's behavior, we have spent

three years studying loyalty programs, point schemes and loyalty structures. We see loyalty members looking for three critical items that we have made inherent to iPrefer:

One, transparency. Knowing the value and the cash value of points allows iPrefer members to understand the possibilities in redeeming points.

Two, flexibility. Since iPrefer points have a defined value, members can redeem their points for more than hotel stays – like spa treatments, meals or golf among other things at participating program properties.

Three, unique experiences. With over 70 percent of the 650 unique properties participating in the program, we are able to offer a large number of very different experiences that make rewards and redemption more interesting, delivering many different memories from around the world.

BT: As the president and now CEO, what do you feel are the unique opportunities you have with premium travelers that others in the space don't?

UEBERROTH: I see the role I'm doing as not that much different, just fulfilling it with my influence and touch going forward. It is still very early so I have really enjoyed flying around the world talking to travelers, partners and hotels with a different set of eyes and ears. Looking for new triggers to further shape my opinions. A fun rebirth of looking at what we do.

BT: With respect to growth, what is your magical mix?

UEBERROTH: Independent hotels continue to pick up steam. In the next several years I want to position the Preferred Hotel Group as an iconic global brand and the place to go that is a wonderful, unique and fulfilling experience.

With that goal, of course I need many things but some keys are more of the same great people and talent as we already have at every level. I also need to continue to make sure we have the right hotels in the right locations. And then that those hotels are fulfilling the various aspects of what travelers are looking for, whether that is business, spa, culinary, sports or what have you. People travel for their passion. A great example is our community we have built around the Preferred Golf collection. We have built a great collection of hotels that really caters to the enthusiast.

BT: As guests leave your properties, what impression do you want them to have?

UEBERROTH: I want people to leave a Preferred Hotel Group property with a memory, a sense of bragging rights around the experience; the meal, the service, the whole package. I want them to tell their friends and see them again at this property or another Preferred Hotel.

WORLD'S TALLEST HOTEL OPENS SECOND TOWER

The second tower at JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai, the world's tallest hotel, is now open. The addition of 294 new rooms bring the total room count to 1,098. The hotel opened 804 rooms in Tower 1 in November 2012; by September of this year it will offer 1,608 rooms across the two towers.



There will also be two new food and beverage outlets in Tower 2. Altogether the hotel boasts nine restaurants, five bars, two ballrooms, and a spa and health club.

Guest rooms are equipped with modern technology, including LCD TVs, iPod stations, WiFi and a master room control tablet. The hotel's 81,000-plus square feet of total event space features two ballrooms and 32 flexible meeting rooms.

For details visit marriott.com.