

# hotel

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HotelManagement.net

Vol. 228, No. 14 | November 2013

A Questex Hospitality Group Publication

# MANAGEMENT

→ pulse

MARKET DYNAMICS

Top combined supply and demand rankings of select markets by index

- 1 203 San Francisco
- 2 194 Oakland, Calif.
- 3 182 Boston
- 4 178 San Jose, Calif.

Source: CBRE-EA and PwC

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NEWS

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## 5 QUESTIONS WITH ...

# Lindsey Ueberroth

Preferred Hotel Group's president shares her own travel preferences

You might expect the president of a hotel group that counts some of the world's most luxurious lodgings among its members to care only about the best of the best. But Preferred Hotel Group president Lindsey Ueberroth knows that today's travelers are changing, concerned with value and experience above all else. She shares with us some ways hotels can keep that guest-centric mantra front and center.

**HM: Preferred is known for having some of the world's most amazing hotel and resort properties among its membership. Can you share a couple of properties that really mean a lot to you personally?**

**LU:** This is always a tough question. Among the properties that I always enjoy visiting include Finca Cortesin Hotel & Spa on the Malaga Coast of Spain; The Upper House in Hong Kong; Montage Laguna Beach (which is in my own backyard and simply amazing) and The Mark Hotel in New York City.

**HM: Everyone in the hotel industry, from ultra-luxury down to economy, is concerned about guest satisfaction these days. What are some simple, yet cost-effective, customer service tips that hotels from all segments can learn from those hotels at the very top of their game?**

**LU:** It's imperative to be aware of what customers are saying about your hotel at all times. Use an aggregator to monitor reviews and comments from guests and quickly compare them to your comp set on a daily basis. Set alerts to ensure problems are brought to your attention immediately so you can forward the comments to the appropriate department heads for a quick and effective resolution. Responses should be prompt and genuine, directly addressing the specific issue and

offering an appropriate solution. Finally, always invite a phone call and be ready to listen to any issue firsthand.

**HM: Your company's brands touch on a lot of different travel trends, from design to boutique style to residences and resorts. Do you think travelers' values have changed in the last few years?**

**LU:** Values have become more narrowly focused and hotels are having to make adjustments. The traditional traveler was looking for a clean, safe, accessible hotel for a good price. Today's traveler values accessibility and choice at the point of sale, a seamless arrival and check-in process, a strong Wi-Fi connection and meaningful, useful services. Today's travelers also value hotels that offer them a true experience. We are seeing more and more requests from guests looking to stay somewhere that is authentic to the destination and that provides a unique perspective.

**HM: You must travel frequently. What are your must-haves for long plane trips?** **LU:** Eminence Citrus Lip Balm, an iPad Mini, Bose noise-cancelling headphones, a cashmere wrap and a large bottle of water.

**HM: So many mainstream hotel brands today are going after the millennial traveler. What do you think these folks value most in a stay and how can hotels address that?**

**LU:** Today's younger travelers view hotels both as places to rest and as destinations where they can have fun, meet new friends and experience different cultures. Millennial travelers are anything but cookie-cutter, so going by the book is not an option. Being able to anticipate these travelers' needs and meet their



PREFERRED HOTEL GROUP

standards is becoming more complex. Hotels should acquire knowledge of guests' preferences through consistent communication before, during and after the stay experience using social media tools and in-person interactions and then store the findings in a CRM system. Hotels that take the time to connect with their guests in this fashion, to ensure future stays are tailored and even more memorable, will win the attention and loyalty of the millennial traveler. **HM**

—Stephanie Ficca