

GHN EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Lindsey Ueberroth, President, Preferred Hotel Group



GlobalHotelNetwork.com: What goals are at the forefront of your agenda?

Lindsey Ueberroth: The agenda for Preferred Hotel Group is a thoughtful and measured plan for growth, as we are focusing on several core priorities that will help further the successes of our partner hotels and the growth of our global footprint.

Retaining and increasing revenue for our partner hotels is always our top priority. We plan to continue to invest in programs, services, technology, and sales efforts to support our hotels and help them maintain a competitive edge in today's global environment.

Growth for our portfolio will continue, albeit strategically. We are not interested in growth for growth's sake. Our goal is to have the right hotels in the right markets to give consumers multiple options regardless of where they are traveling. To achieve this, we have identified where we presently have little or no presence and are working to increase our footprint in those destinations. We are focusing on growth in key cities in South America, the Middle East, and places like North Africa throughout the next 12 months.

The development of our segment marketing programs continues to be a priority. The Preferred Family, Preferred Pride, and Preferred Golf programs are growing in number and awareness,



which in turn generates greater knowledge of our brand and participating member hotels that offer programs for these targeted traveler segments.

Finally, I am excited to share that we will introduce our revamped loyalty program in June 2013. We have spent much time studying how loyalty points drive consumers' booking decisions, so our new rendition of I Prefer will help us better compete with larger chains, extend more flexibility for consumers who want to earn and redeem rewards at our member hotels, and provide our partners with new reasons to communicate with current and potential guests.

GlobalHotelNetwork.com: What is your outlook for the travel and tourism industry for the next few years? What opportunities and challenges do you see?

Lindsey Ueberroth: 2013 will be a challenging year for the travel and tourism industry as economic recovery worldwide continues to be steady, but slow. China, Brazil, Russia, and India will continue to be strong markets, both as inbound and outbound markets. The relatively lower levels of public debt in these regions, leading economic growth, expansion of business activities into emerging markets, changing consumer lifestyles and increasing disposable incomes are fueling growth. We added resources in China to support and capitalize on the future growth potential of that specific market.

There will be stable growth in Europe and North America. Although, Europe has a tough road ahead and I am cautiously optimistic about the region's outlook. With the prolonged credit crunch and an expected fall in investment and spending throughout most countries in Europe, hoteliers face an uncertain short-term future.

It will be important for hoteliers worldwide to reduce unnecessary operational expenses and be strategic. This is where Preferred comes in as a popular and discerning choice. We provide our member hotels with many benefits they could not achieve on a stand-alone basis, including robust travel agent relationships, a global presence that is especially advantageous in the realm of reservations, visibility amongst the more than 1.3 million travelers in our loyalty program, and more – all while allowing them to maintain their autonomy. These services are invaluable to the independent hotelier, especially in today's economic climate as they look for opportunities for increased revenue. As the number of global travelers increase, we help ensure our member hotels capture that market share.

GlobalHotelNetwork.com: Preferred Hospitality Group is the parent company of Preferred Hotel Group, Historic Hotels Worldwide, and Optriant. Please comment on these business entities, recent developments and your growth aspirations.

Lindsey Ueberroth: I'll start with Preferred Hotel Group, which is celebrating its 45th anniversary this year. Preferred Hotel Group is a global company that provides sales, branding, marketing support, cutting-edge distribution and technology solutions, and quality assurance programs to more than 650 independent hotels in 85 countries around the world. Our family of brands includes Preferred Hotels® & Resorts, Preferred Boutique™, Summit Hotels & Resorts™, Sterling Hotels™, Sterling Design, and Summit Serviced Residences™. We also offer Preferred Residences™, a collection of luxury shared ownership resorts that provides an exceptional level of service and amenities. In 2012, Preferred Hotel Group welcomed more than 65 new member hotels, which includes the addition of marquis properties such as The Alpina Gstaad, The Mark, Wynn Las Vegas and Encore and a new presence in countries such as Iraq, Georgia, and the Maldives. We expect continued growth throughout 2013.

Historic Hotels Worldwide and Historic Hotels of America are unique collections of hotels, castles, palaces, and resorts that are more than 50 years old (Historic Hotels of America) and 75 years old (Historic Hotels Worldwide) and preserve their historic significance while providing luxury travel experiences. These brands showcases the history of the lodging industry's most prestigious accommodations, and we look forward to adding new marquis hotels to both portfolios throughout the coming years.

The launch of Optriant, which occurred late last year, allows us to represent all travel companies outside of the hotel industry such as cruise lines, destination management companies and airlines by tapping into the global sales and marketing expertise and services of Preferred Hotel Group. Currently representing two clients in the cruising industry, this new division represents great growth, and we are very excited about the potential partnership agreements that will come to fruition in the near future.

GlobalHotelNetwork.com: Talk a bit about Preferred Hospitality Group's mission, vision, culture and core values. What would you say is your distinctive and/or competitive advantage?

Lindsey Ueberroth: Preferred Hospitality Group is a global leader in the travel industry with a unique approach of embracing the spirit of the independent operator and representing a diverse collection of companies. Team work, innovation, initiative, global perspective, and integrity are the core values that drive our daily activities.

Preferred provides strategic group, corporate, and leisure sales, integrated marketing solutions, comprehensive revenue management, global connectivity through reservations services, progressive distribution technology, and individualized guest support to our members.

Several factors play into Preferred's competitive advantage. Our unique multi-brand structure provides hotel owners and operators more options to align with the brand that best fits their needs rather than presenting an all-or-nothing approach. The strong relationships that our global sales team maintains and leverages with corporate and leisure travel agents on their behalf help to ensure that our member hotels are front-and-center with key influencers who make the booking decisions, which reinforces our goal to increase their revenue. On a global level, having 210 employees in 30 offices around the world provides us with unparalleled worldwide in-market presence and local expertise, which better positions us to serve our member hotels.

GlobalHotelNetwork.com: How does environmental responsibility factor into your operational and development plans?

Lindsey Ueberroth: Philanthropy is a prominent foundation of my family's professional and personal philosophy, and we are very supportive of our member hotels who demonstrate similar beliefs. In 2006, we introduced the GIFTTS program – Great Initiatives for Today's (Tomorrow's) Society – to recognize member hotels that embrace community and social responsibility. Each year, we identify hotels that showcased a great commitment to community service, philanthropy, and environment, and honor winners in each category at our annual conference for taking the meaning of genuine hospitality beyond their front doors and into the world. The proactive initiatives of our independent hotels not only positively impact local communities, but also set inspiring examples for the travel industry worldwide.

GlobalHotelNetwork.com: In what ways is Preferred Hospitality Group using social media and mobile technology to enhance its business and brands?

Lindsey Ueberroth: Preferred has several channels across Twitter and Facebook, and we're starting to take a more holistic and integrated approach. We use those outlets to both promote the exciting programming of our member hotels and connect with consumers at different touch points before, during, and after their stay at member hotels. These thoughtful conversations play a large role in increasing brand awareness, spark word-of-mouth recommendations, and increase consumer loyalty. We're currently testing different tactics via social media to see what resonates best with our consumers and identify how best to bridge the conversations online and offline.

In terms of mobile, we introduced a new booking engine channel in the middle of 2012 that provided effective mobile solutions for each of our hotels. We will be launching our brand mobile websites and booking engine within the next few months.

GlobalHotelNetwork.com: Looking back, what would you say are some of Preferred Hospitality Group's significant milestones and defining moments?

Lindsey Ueberroth: It has been nine years since my family bought Preferred Hotel Group, and it is truly inspiring to look back at how many significant milestones we have achieved in this short time frame. In less than a decade, the company has introduced three new brands – Preferred Boutique, Summit Serviced Residences, and Sterling Design – grown to more than 650 members hotels and resorts in 85 countries, and increased our team to more than 200 employees in 30 offices worldwide. We celebrated a major accomplishment last year with the introduction of Optriant, which allowed us to extend sales, marketing, reservations services to additional sectors of the travel industry – no longer exclusively to hotels.

GlobalHotelNetwork.com: On a personal note, what do you enjoy most about being in the hospitality business and what advice would you give to young executives getting into the business today?

Lindsey Ueberroth: I love the people and the global nature of the business. Hospitality executives are some of the most engaging, well-traveled, fascinating, and thoughtful people I have ever met. The nature of the industry allows you to meet people with such diverse backgrounds and experiences -- it always makes for great cocktail party conversations. I would tell any new executive getting into the business today that they must have a passion for their field to really succeed and to form lasting connections with the incredible people they meet along the way.

GlobalHotelNetwork.com: What business principles guide you? What is the best piece of advice you ever received? Who mentored you?

Lindsey Ueberroth: The best advice I ever received was “listen” and then “listen some more before making decisions,” “never be afraid to ask questions”, and “attitude is 90% of the game.” My father has been an incredible mentor to me throughout my life but even more so in business. He continues to be a great source of guidance and a wonderful sounding board.

GlobalHotelNetwork.com: Which company(ies) and/or business executive(s) -- outside the hospitality & travel industry -- do you most admire and why?

Lindsey Ueberroth: There are so many, but here are a few of the executives and their companies I admire the most:

- Bill Gates for his commitment to philanthropy
- Warren Buffet for his vision
- Apple for its innovation



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- Nordstrom's for its focus and commitment to creating a best-in-class customer services experience
- Lululemon for its ability to create and foster a unique culture while building a rapidly growing business

GlobalHotelNetwork.com: Are there any books that you have recently read that you found helpful from a leadership, management or business point of view?

Lindsey Ueberroth: There are many that I thought were valuable for different reasons. Here are a few favorites:

- *Fierce Conversations* by Susan Scott
- *You Can't Lead with your Feet on the Desk* by Ed Fuller
- *The Strategist* by Cynthia Montgomery
- *Seven Timeless Principles for Effective Leaders* by Joel Manny

Lindsey Ueberroth, President, Preferred Hotel Group, is a Member of GlobalHotelNetwork.com's [Advisory Editorial Board](#).