

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN HOTEL + LODGING ASSOCIATION

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LODGING



HOW NEW
OVERTIME
RULES WILL
HARM YOUR
BOTTOM LINE

**GOING
GOING
GONE!**
THE ONLINE
REAL ESTATE
MARKETPLACE
IS HEATING UP

FOLLOW THE
LEADER **20**
**INFLUENTIAL
WOMEN ON
THE FUTURE
OF LODGING**

MICHELLE RUSSO | FOUNDER AND CEO
HOTEL ASSET VALUE ENHANCEMENT

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LEADING WOMEN IN LODGING

BY MEGAN SULLIVAN, KATE HUGHES, AND CASEY GALE

TOP FEMALE
EXECUTIVES
MAKE THEIR
MARK ON THE
HOSPITALITY
INDUSTRY

Although women make up a high proportion of the travel and tourism workforce, men continue to dominate top leadership positions. The sector is expected to generate 73 million new jobs by 2022, which means there will be plenty of career opportunities to go around. But the challenge lies not in recruiting women but in developing, retaining, and advancing them to the highest levels. According to a 2015 study produced by the Hospitality Industry Pipeline Coalition, women hold less than 40 percent of all managerial and supervisory positions in the international hospitality industry. Despite this imbalance, the industry has built a good reputation for enabling entry-level employees to climb the corporate ladder—even dishwashers can find a path to the C-suite. *Lodging* turns the spotlight on successful female leaders who are making their mark in hospitality. These talented execs share how they got their start and what catapulted them to the top.





LINDSEY UEBERROTH

**CEO, PREFERRED
HOTELS & RESORTS**

If you ask Lindsey Ueberroth how she got her start in the lodging industry, the president and CEO of Preferred Hotels & Resorts would say she grew up in it. With a flight-attendant mother and a father who worked in travel, she describes her family as "great consumers of hotels." While lodging officially became the Ueberroth family business 12 years ago with the purchase of the Preferred Hotel Group, it was earlier this year that the company turned its focus toward consumer-facing endeavors and rebranded as Preferred Hotels & Resorts. Ueberroth shares what this process has meant for her as a leader.

What were the key drivers behind this new direction for the company? ■ We were looking at what we saw in overall consumer and traveler trends, and we wanted to start catering to how travelers are booking their trips today. They're really looking more for experience-based travel. So we decided that we needed to clarify our brand messaging and make it more apparent to travelers what we stand for as a brand and what the independent hotel experience is about. We also really want the person booking to say, "This hotel is perfect for me and for the event that I'm attending."

Did you have to adjust your management style to the new company strategy and brand architecture? ■ There hasn't been much of a change in my overall style, but my focus has absolutely had to shift. I've been very diligent



about my focus and how I communicate it to our internal team and our hotels, because you don't want to go through a change and find yourself slipping back into old habits. I may also be a little more intense than I have been in the past, but that's because we've invested so much into this transition. So the focus has been very different, and I'm trying to remind everyone that this isn't a sprint, it's a marathon.

What in the future of Preferred Hotels & Resorts has you the most excited? ■ The way we are going to evolve as a company to communicate what an independent hotel experience is to the traveler. We're going to try new things with social media that we haven't done in the past. We're revamping our loyalty program. But I'm most excited that there's more to change come, and we are nimble enough to do it in a short enough time period that people definitely take notice. It's wonderful to have a plan and see these new things roll out. The change is exciting in itself.