

the business travel magazine

Rs. 100

# MICEtalk

Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

Volume V Issue 8 August 2014 60 pages  
A DDP Publication

Overcome  
Travel Phobia

Business  
*for 300*  
on a Boat



Going  
Global



# Expanding Globally

## Preferred Hotel Group

In conversation with **MICETalk**, **Lindsey Ueberroth**, President & CEO, Preferred Hotel Group, talks about the group's plans to lure MICE planners and grow in the segment.

Deepa Sethi

### **1 Do you feel the MICE market is growing substantially the world over?**

Absolutely. Preferred Hotel Group has witnessed excellent growth in MICE business globally, especially in markets like Europe, South America and Southeast Asia. As a company, we placed more than \$30 million in MICE business in 2013 and are on pace to exceed \$40 million in 2014. This upward trend is due in part to the fact that many corporations are realising that incentive travel remains one of the best ways to keep their employees happy, motivated, and engaged. Destinations like Paris, Athens, Istanbul and Barcelona are becoming increasingly popular for long-haul incentive trips of more than five days for companies based in Asia Pacific.

### **2 Is MICE business a part of the strategic plan for Preferred Hotel Group?**

As an important source of revenue for the majority of our member hotels around the world, MICE business



Q&A

has always been an important aspect of Preferred Hotel Group's strategic global plan. An ongoing goal for the company is to drive more business from this segment to our international destinations, and we have supported this effort by adding group and MICE sales associates in key strategic markets around the world such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and Singapore and by opening a dedicated Group Desk in Europe. Awareness of the portfolio of services and destinations Preferred Hotel Group has to offer is vital to increasing our success within the MICE space, so we are constantly looking at how to better utilise technology, social media sites such as LinkedIn, and digital marketing and trying new tactics such as Signature Event gatherings. We are also working on brand-level partnerships with companies like American Express that will greatly help expand our presence on a global scale and look forward to sharing news of those alliances in the coming months.

### **3** What percentage of Preferred Hotel Group's business comes from MICE/ Business?

In 2013, MICE business accounted for more than six per cent of the overall revenue Preferred Hotel Group generated on behalf of member hotels globally. This number has grown continuously year over year, and we expect that pace to continue.

### **4** Does Preferred Hotel Group concentrate on conventions and meetings with in-house facilities and services?

We find that many of our group clients prefer to book their business at properties that offer in-house meeting facilities and even an in-house convention facilities depending on the scale of the event. Working with a hotel or resort that offers everything onsite is a strategic way to manage costs, streamline the planning efforts, and keep attendees focussed on the meeting objectives. More hotels are realising the trend towards this preference and are enhancing their in-house capabilities to capture the business and drive more revenue.

### **5** Why should MICE groups select one of the Preferred Hotel Group properties for their events?

We offer a team of more than 65 dedicated sales specialists in nearly 40 offices around the globe, providing planners with a central contact for one-stop consulting, booking, and support wherever they are based or looking to go. More and more, we are seeing that clients want authentic experiences, unique venues, and a true sense of place, preferring the independent hotel experience over the international chain brand. With more than 650 world-class independent hotels and resorts in 85 countries, our portfolio is perfectly suited to satisfy this new trend. The diversity in style, settings, and size that exists across our collection gives planners the freedom to choose a venue according to their taste, never feeling as if they have to compromise or go the cookie cutter route. Given the plethora of



*The Fullerton Hotel Singapore*

options available, we created a dedicated portal, PHGMeetings.com, to help clients quickly locate their ideal venue, whether they are looking for a boutique hotel to host an eight-person Board of Directors meeting, such as Suryagarh in Jaisalmer, or a beachside resort with pristine convention space for 1,000 delegates, such as The Leela Kovalam.

### **6** What services do you offer for MICE planners?

Preferred Hotel Group recently re-launched its iPrefer guest loyalty program to include points and tiers – a transformation designed to enhance the value we can offer both MICE planners and corporate travellers. Now, members of the program can earn points redeemable for cash-value reward certificates, elite status, and special benefits such as complimentary Internet upon every stay at more than 500 participating independent hotels and resorts worldwide.

Q  
&  
A