

Welcoming You Like Family

An Interview with Jonathan Tisch, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Loews Hotels & Co



Jonathan Tisch

EDITORS' NOTE Jonathan Tisch is Chairman and CEO of Loews Hotels & Co and Co-Chairman of the Board and Member of the Office of the President of Loews Corporation. He has led Loews' expansion and emergence as a leading hotel company with a culture that embraces the power of partnerships – with team members, guests, communities and owners. He was previously voted "Hotelier of the World" by *HOTELS* magazine. Recognized nationally as a leader of the multi-billion dollar travel and tourism industry, Tisch founded and served as Chairman of the Travel Business Roundtable, and now serves as Chairman Emeritus of its successor organization, the United States Travel Association. Committed to a vibrant tourism industry locally, he served as Chairman of NYC & Company, the city's official tourism agency, for nearly six years. Concurrent with his national efforts to help stimulate travel in the aftermath of 9/11, Tisch served as Chairman of New York Rising, which played an instrumental role in reviving tourism and the local economy. Tisch is the author of three bestselling books: *The Power of We: Succeeding Through Partnerships*; *Chocolates on the Pillow Aren't*

Enough: Reinventing the Customer Experience; and *Citizen You: Doing Your Part to Change the World*. He was the host of the Emmy-nominated television series, *Beyond the Boardroom*. Tisch is a champion of civic engagement and currently serves on the Board of The Shed, New York's new cultural center for artistic invention, as well as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees for Tufts University, where he is the naming benefactor of the Tisch College of Civic Life. He was instrumental in bringing Super Bowl XLVIII to the region and served as co-chair of the historic 2014 NY/NJ Super Bowl Host Committee. He is a co-owner of the 2007 and 2011 Super Bowl Champion New York Giants.

COMPANY BRIEF Headquartered in New York City, Loews Hotels & Co (loewshotels.com) is rooted in deep heritage and excellence in service. The hospitality company encompasses branded independent Loews Hotels, and a solid mix of partner-brand hotels. Loews Hotels & Co owns and/or operates 26 hotels and resorts across the U.S. and Canada, including the new Loews Kansas City and Universal's Endless Summer Resort – Dockside Inn and Suites, the eighth hotel

in partnership with Comcast NBC Universal, that opened at the end of 2020. Located in major city centers and resort destinations from coast to coast, the Loews Hotels portfolio features properties grounded in family heritage and dedicated to delivering unscripted guest moments with a handcrafted approach.

Will you highlight Loews Hotels' history and heritage and what have been the keys to the company's consistent strength and leadership?

For the past seven decades, our family has been committed to creating partnerships with three vital constituencies; our guests, our team members, and the communities where our hotels reside. This commitment started with my grandparents, Sayde and Al Tisch, my parents, Joan and Bob, my aunt and uncle, Billie and Larry, and carries on today as I work with my cousins, Andrew and Jim.

How do you define Loews Hotels' culture and how critical has it been to maintain culture as the company has grown in size and scale?

Our culture is summed up in our brand's core message: "Welcoming You Like Family." This sensibility permeates in everything we do and is the North Star for how we interact with our guests and team members. Even now that we are 26 hotels, with a few more opening soon, nothing has changed and this will continue to be who we are and how we operate our hotels.

How did Loews Hotels adapt its business to address the challenges caused by the pandemic and how proud are you to see the resilience of your team during this unprecedented time?

The last year and a half in the travel industry has been the most difficult in its history. As Chairman Emeritus of the United States Travel Association, I have never been so proud of the women and men who lead the once thought of disparate entities of this industry. We put aside our individual concerns and worked together to ensure that the millions of our dedicated and caring team members were treated with respect and that we understood their challenges and concerns.

At Loews Hotels & Co, we continually kept our focus on caring for our team members, while reducing costs until business began to return, and planning for the brighter days ahead which we knew were coming.



Live! by Loews – Arlington, Texas (above); Loews Sapphire Falls Resort at Universal Orlando in Florida (below)

How has the hospitality industry rebounded from the pandemic and how critical is it for international travel and business travel to return in order for hospitality to truly recover?

The recovery to date, which in some markets has been quite strong, has been based on leisure travel and pent up demand. People want to experience life again, and inasmuch as travel has a positive impact on all corners of our great country, we are seeing the recovery commence. But for us to continue to see positive improvement, we need business travel to resume and groups to once again meet. We call on our government to reopen our borders so we are able to welcome travelers from international destinations again, as those guests stay longer and spend more money, and usually return home with positive impressions of our country.

How critical is it for Loews Hotels to build a diverse and inclusive workforce in order to mirror the diversity of its guests and the communities it serves?

One of the wonderful aspects of our industry is the diversity of our workforce and our guests. We at Loews Hotels & Co respect and welcome that our team members hail from a multiplicity of backgrounds and cultures, and we embrace their individuality and dreams. Our goal is to be able to offer growth and new career opportunities to all and help educate high school and college students about how a career in lodging can be fulfilling and rewarding.

What do you see as Loews Hotels' responsibility to the communities it serves and to being a force for good in society?

More than 20 years ago, we were one of the first lodging companies to incorporate a program that demonstrated our caring for the communities where we operate our properties. The Loews Hotels Good Neighbor Policy

continues today as a comprehensive blueprint for how we demonstrate our understanding and responsibilities. I am also incredibly proud of how the majority of the companies based in lodging today are helping their neighbors in so many meaningful ways.

What are the keys to New York's recovery and rebuilding from the pandemic and are you optimistic about New York's future?

This is a given – New Yorkers are caring, resilient and creative. We will need all of these traits and more as we rebuild from the impact of the pandemic, both socially and economically. This will happen when our elected officials do their jobs and work closely with us in the private sector as we reduce regulation, create new opportunities and rebuild our communities and economy.

What do you see as the keys to effective leadership and how do you describe your management style?

Being a big believer in giving people the tools to do their jobs and then getting out of the way, I try not to micromanage, and offer assistance when asked. We cannot be all things to all people. We need to recognize what we are good at, and then surround ourselves with women and men who compliment us. It's also so important to listen and not be the one doing all the talking. And try not to take yourself too seriously.

What advice do you offer young people beginning their careers during this challenging and unprecedented time?

If you are just graduating school or entering the workforce for the first time, take a job, any job, even if it might not be exactly what you think you are looking for. We learn from every experience and we never know where we will end up. And never start a paragraph with the word "I", as it makes you think of yourself as more important than the person you are communicating with. ●

