

Delivering Memorable Experiences

An Interview with Brett D. Reizen, President and Chief Executive Officer, EBG

EDITORS' NOTE Brett Reizen co-founded EBG in 2001 and led its transition from a small tech start-up to one of the largest, privately held e-commerce companies specializing in travel and entertainment in the United States. Prior to co-founding EBG, Reizen was the Senior Business Development Manager for EnSpot.com, an Internet marketing company that managed online promotional campaigns for movie studios, national concert tours, Broadway shows, and large entertainment venues. Reizen received a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Miami.



Brett D. Reizen

COMPANY BRIEF EBG (ebgsolutions.com) is an e-commerce solutions provider specializing in travel and entertainment, and also offers retail products and services, voluntary benefits and insurance. EBG powers a robust portfolio of technology solutions and operates a network of employer and membership-based platforms reaching a captive audience, providing leading brands with incremental distribution opportunities. EBG's expanded network reaches over 100 million users from participating companies and closed loop affinity and membership groups. EBG owns and operates one of the largest and most comprehensive employee savings programs in the country – serving over 40,000 corporate clients through its proprietary platforms TicketsatWork, Plum Benefits,

Working Advantage, and Beneplace. EBG is a b2b2c company headquartered in Miami (Aventura), with offices in New York, Orlando, Austin, and Las Vegas.

What was your vision for founding EBG and how has the company evolved over the past 20 years?

The concept for the business came at a time when travel was reeling from the events of September 11, 2001. My vision was to bring fun and happiness back to the workplace by offering entertaining experiences for people to enjoy, while also fueling growth for the travel and entertainment industry. The goal was to create an innovative way to connect the world's greatest travel and entertainment brands to businesses and their employees with unique and special offers – always at an affordable price. This was an untapped market and ripe with opportunity.

We are a very different company than we were 20 years ago and I'm proud of that evolution. We have strategically acquired or merged with prominent organizations that have contributed to our growth. We have further fueled our growth through strong investments from Creative Artists Agency (CAA) and the Shubert Organization, and their support and guidance have helped EBG grow tremendously. Also, we have been diligent in building a team of experienced and dedicated employees who believe in innovation and hard work.

How do you define EBG's mission and purpose?

It is crucial for us to consistently deliver memorable experiences for our customers, as well as exceed the expectations of our clients and partners. EBG's success has been fueled by strong relationships with industry leading suppliers, innovating our technology to deliver solutions for clients and partners across our network of platforms, by increasing sales volume and keeping our customers excited and satisfied. None of this can be done without an incredible team of people to execute on the mission and bring fun, optimism, and innovation to work each and every day.

How important has it been for EBG to maintain its culture as the company has grown in size and scale?

We launched EBG out of a garage in Fort Lauderdale in 2001. We had to be tenacious and innovative to survive and grow, but we were also having a lot of fun. Twenty years later, we're still enjoying the ride, but we're no longer in a garage. In fact, we have expanded our team to more than 250 team members in five offices; however, as the team has grown, we've maintained our ability to be agile, move swiftly and continue to have a growth mindset that there is always more we can do.

Will you provide an overview of EBG's solutions and where you see the greatest opportunities for growth?

We are unique in that our technology powers solutions for employers – HR/Benefits providers who want to offer a discount platform

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for their employees. We power solutions for membership groups – we white label our technology for organizations to enhance their member benefits with travel and entertainment offers we source through supplier partners. And, lastly, we help brands in travel, entertainment, and retail distribute their products and services through our network of closed loop employer and membership-based platforms.

For the next three to five years, our expanding list of offerings is showing great growth potential, including flights, vacation rentals, cruises, and additional hotel inventory and functionality. We'll also continue to expand our marketplace of products and services, including voluntary benefits and insurance.

How did EBG adapt the way it works to address the challenges caused by the pandemic?

Since 2010, EBG has successfully enjoyed revenue growth of at least 20 percent every single year (until the pandemic hit in 2020). When the pandemic shut down travel and entertainment, our core business stopped overnight. We quickly switched gears to focus on and expand the available products and services that people desperately needed at the time. This included laptops and other “work from home” items, grocery delivery, the Calm app, Sam's Club membership, and more. Our ability to be strong and nimble kept us going. During this time, we invested in expanding the travel platform and have since launched new verticals, including discounted flights, vacation rentals, specially priced vacation packages and thousands of more hotels.

The travel and entertainment sector continues to improve, and we are helping people fulfill the strong desire for travel, vacations, fun, and family. Helping our customers enjoy life again is a great feeling.

How proud are you to see the strength and resilience of your team during this challenging and uncertain time?

I am truly grateful and inspired by our employees' ability to pivot, duck, and swoop to keep EBG moving forward during the pandemic. With so much uncertainty, I think our collective focus helped to keep all of our chaotic lives grounded. I'm humbled by the team's dedication to stay positive and open-minded and I'm so proud of what we accomplished together.

Why did EBG choose to refresh the brand?

We felt the brand refresh was a timely way to showcase EBG's tremendous growth and celebrate 20 years in business. We want to communicate our position as a solutions provider for employers, membership groups and retail brands through a bold and fresh visual identity that embodies our vibrancy and strength.

How critical is it for EBG to build a diverse and inclusive workforce to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the table when making business decisions?

We have observed that when employees are included in organizational discourse and treated equitably, they are more productive and stay with the company longer. More than that, EBG seeks to provide solutions to organizations across the country that employ diverse

workforces. We want to communicate to those organizations that we value diverse perspectives, and we can accomplish that by demonstrating our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion both internally and externally. We want our partners to see us as an organization that recognizes how a representational workforce can enhance our awareness of the needs of our valued clients and partners.

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

We know that we are fortunate to be in an industry we love, doing work that is fun and rewarding, so whenever we find opportunities to give back in the communities we work in, and to help causes in need, we find ways to give back. We also look internally and encourage our employees to give back through a day of giving so they can also support causes or activities that are important to them.

What do you feel are the keys to effective leadership and how do you describe your management style?

We need to be able to prioritize the business and opportunities that allow us to scale and grow. This requires a management style in which we can make decisions quickly and evaluate opportunities collaboratively, while balancing our needs for growth, a strong culture, and satisfied, strong and dedicated team members. I have always believed that leadership requires a positive attitude, adaptability and resilience, which has helped our organization flourish over the last 20 years. ●

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