

At the Heart of Music and Entertainment

An Interview with David Salcfas, General Manager, Hard Rock Hotel New York

EDITORS' NOTE *Hard Rock Hotel New York announced the appointment of David Salcfas as General Manager in June 2023. Salcfas joined Hard Rock Hotel New York after an extensive, distinguished tenure with Marriott International where he made impact as an Executive Committee member across a portfolio of 16 hotels and five brands. His journey spanned 23 positions through sales, catering, events, marketing, and operations across the Eastern region and included Hotel Manager postings for the Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park, and the New York Marriott Marquis. Salcfas earned BS degrees in occupational science, food management, and culinary arts from Johnson and Wales University and studied financial analysis of hotel investments at Cornell University.*



David Salcfas

and bespoke memorabilia. What captivates me most is the expansive 1,600 square foot terrace and freestanding red bathtub that offer breathtaking city views. It's been a favorite of visiting talent since we opened our doors last year and allows us to stay competitive against upper-tier products.

How has Hard Rock Hotel New York approached its restaurant/food and beverage offerings and what are the keys for a hotel to be successful in this area?

We've created a unique offering by pairing inspired culinary experiences with dynamic music and entertainment programming. From our signature day-to-night dining in Sessions to an innovative and refined culinary experience at NYY Steak and an upscale bespoke menu at RT60 Rooftop Bar and Lounge, we offer a range of options to suit locals, theatergoers, and international visitors alike. To be successful, especially in New York City, you must be committed to satisfying a wide range of preferences with anticipatory guest-first service.

Will you discuss Hard Rock Hotel New York's focus on offering personalized service and a customized guest experience?

Access is our secret sauce. We strive to make each guest's trip unforgettable whether it's their first time to New York City or we're their preferred hotel. For example, we launched area guides built by musicians and locals who are deeply connected with New York City. Our relationships with Broadway theaters provide access to the best seats and cast meet-and-greets. We also reserve coveted spots for guests to attend the pop-up performances at The Venue on Music Row, our intimate event space. The line-up has included global superstars and grammy-winning artists. It's these types of experiences and more that elevate your stay from great to extraordinary.

How critical is it for Hard Rock Hotel New York to build a diverse and inclusive workforce to mirror the diversity of the guests it serves?

Being in New York City, our guests come from all corners of the globe, each with their own unique backgrounds and experiences. Guests feel welcomed and understood

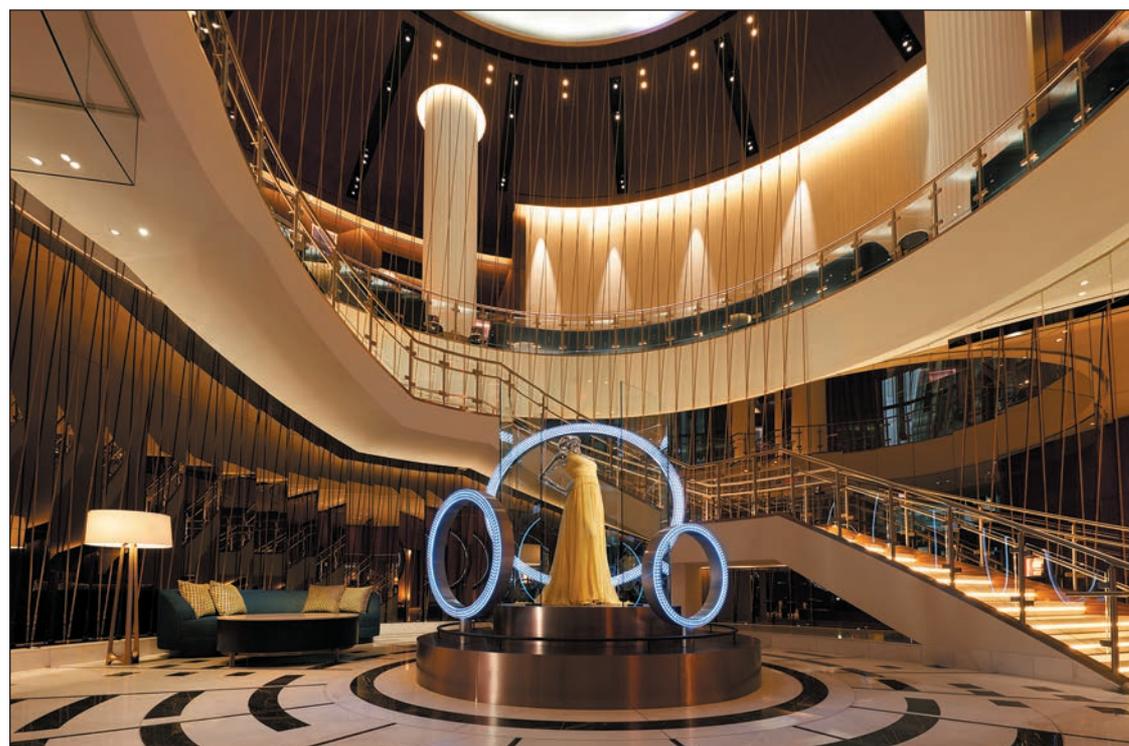
PROPERTY BRIEF *Hard Rock Hotel New York (hardrockhotels.com/new-york), located between the Theatre District and Radio City Music Hall, includes extraordinary entertainment venues, 446 guestrooms and suites across 36 floors, innovative dining, and RT60 Rooftop Bar and Lounge overlooking the world's most iconic skyline. The property offers access to the best of Midtown Manhattan with Broadway, Rockefeller Center, and Fifth Avenue shopping steps away.*

Will you provide an overview of Hard Rock Hotel New York and how the property is positioned in the market?

Hard Rock Hotel New York stands proudly in the heart of Midtown Manhattan between Broadway and Rockefeller Center as a symbol of entertainment, pairing an upscale guest experience with the vibrant energy of Manhattan. Our iconic brand programming is a draw to leisure and business travelers, plus meetings, events, and weddings.

How valuable is it to have such a strong suite product and do you see this as a differentiator for Hard Rock Hotel New York?

The competition in the New York City hotel space is fierce so having a diverse range of room categories is vital, but equally important is the signature suite product, particularly in the entertainment business. Our star is the bi-level Rock Star Suite which features contemporary art



Hard Rock Hotel New York lobby



Rock Star Suite

because we've created an atmosphere of inclusion through our diverse workforce and we're guided in this mission by Hard Rock's core mottos, "Love All-Serve All," "Take Time To Be Kind," "Save the Planet," and "All Is One."

How do you define the role of the general manager and what are the keys to being effective in the role?

The role of the general manager can be likened to that of a band leader, orchestrating various elements to achieve harmony and success. In my role, I'm focused on three metrics which I refer to as the Balanced Scorecard:

1. **Band Member Engagement:** Just like a band is only as good as its members' synchronization, the success of our hotel depends on the engagement and satisfaction of our staff. I prioritize fostering a positive work environment, encouraging open communication, professional growth, and a strong sense of belonging.

2. **Amplify Our Guest Service Offering:** Our guests are our audience, and their satisfaction is our top priority. As the band leader, I'm dedicated to fine-tuning and amplifying our guest service offerings. This involves identifying unique ways to personalize their stay, anticipating their

needs, and delivering memorable experiences. We aim to strike the perfect chord.

3. **Financial Success:** Just as a band needs to maintain its instruments, our hotel's financial health is vital for sustained performance. I take a hands-on approach to financial management, closely monitoring revenue streams, cost control, and operational efficiency. By ensuring a healthy bottom line, we secure the resources needed to continually enhance both guest experiences and the working environment for our team.

What excited you about the opportunity to lead Hard Rock Hotel New York and made you feel it was the right fit?

The prospect of leading Hard Rock Hotel New York was a thrilling one. Having served 16 hotels across five brands throughout my professional journey, what truly excited me about this opportunity was the chance to bring together my diverse experience and blend it with Hard Rock International's genuine entrepreneurial spirit. I'm excited to be at the heart of music and entertainment and contribute to an expanding organization.

What advice do you offer to young people interested in building a career in the hospitality industry?

To young individuals aspiring to forge a career in the dynamic hospitality industry, I offer the following advice: seek mentorship and build networks – a mentor can be an invaluable guide on your journey. Look for experienced professionals who are willing to share their insights, provide guidance, and help you navigate the industry's intricacies. Surround yourself with a network of leaders and peers who share your passion.

Start with the end goal in mind. Envision where you want to be in your career – whether it's becoming a general manager, leading a department, or pursuing a specialized role. Having a clear end goal in mind will give your career direction and purpose. ●

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RT60 Rooftop Bar & Lounge