

Embracing the History of New York City: A Loyalty360 Interview with Gerald Barad of Triumph Hotels

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From polished Midtown luxury to chic downtown style, Triumph Hotels is a collection of six boutique Manhattan hotels with each offering a distinct take on the city experience. The Iroquois New York, Hotel Chandler, Hotel Belleclaire, The Cosmopolitan, The Gershwin and The Washington Jefferson showcase history, architecture, design, service, and notable neighborhood locations.

Esteemed guests who stayed at these hotels include Babe Ruth (Belleclaire) and James Dean (The Iroquois). Triumph Hotels cover the following vital New York City neighborhoods: Upper West Side, Theater District, Midtown, NoMad, Flatiron, and TriBeCa.

Family-owned and operated since 1951, Triumph owns and manages these six iconic hotels in New York City. Triumph Hotels comprises 460,000 square feet and nearly 1,000 rooms in its portfolio. It has invested \$50 million to renovate and refresh historic buildings over the past several years.


Gerald Barad, co-owner of Triumph Hotels, participated in a fascinating interview with Loyalty360 CEO & CMO Mark Johnson to discuss the February launch of Triumph Hotels and his plans involving customer loyalty and engagement.



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Want Guests to Feel Emotional Connection to Hotels

Barad: Triumph is a new brand, just unveiled, and encompasses six properties in six different neighborhoods. Each property has five common pillars: history in New York City, distinct architecture, responsive service, innovative design, and sense of place within the neighborhoods in which they exist.

Through renovations, the original architecture has been restored and gives guests an emotional connection and sense of history when they walk through the doors.

Loyalty Program in the Works

Barad: Our loyalty program is being developed as well as the value system that will be its centerpiece. For us, loyalty is about our guests feeling committed to the brand and committed to the brand values.

We differentiate ourselves from others by offering New York City experiences in a way other hotels cannot. Within the program, Triumph will offer rewards to be redeemed at retail outlets, restaurants, tours and events and more that are local and connected in some way to the properties and neighborhoods.

Tier-based Loyalty Structure?

Barad: Yes, having tiers will be an important part of our program. Our hotels are so different, in various neighborhoods, and with exceptional characteristics that make each stay special in its own way and we want to reward guests who spend time getting to know them all. We encourage our guests to travel among our properties.

Challenges

Barad: These hotels were all marketed individually. We're just beginning the process of cross-marketing them and letting our guests know they have options in other parts of Manhattan. We're spending a lot of time and energy cultivating that aspect of the brand.

We're showcasing the hotels' separate experiences, for example, some are ideal for families, other for corporate travelers, but with all six, there is something for everyone.

View of Traditional Loyalty Program

Barad: Today's travelers are very accustomed to loyalty programs. They're so common among airlines, rental car agencies, and hotels and have become somewhat generic.

What we're doing is offering rewards that are unique, trying to differentiate ourselves and offer experiential rewards that they can only have staying at a Triumph property. We're a brand that spends a lot of time and energy focusing on the emotional connection that our guests have to the properties.

We want travelers to view the loyalty program as something they want to be a part of because they will get rewarded in a way that is special and meaningful to them. Maybe more than an upgrade, they'd rather a picnic in Central Park, a bicycle tour in TriBeCa, or an evening in the Theater District. We're very committed to personalizing the program and using guests' preferences to tailor rewards accordingly.

Cultivating a Unique New York City Experience

Barad: A priority for Triumph Hotels is to cultivate inimitable New York City experiences.

Because we're developing our loyalty program now, I'm pretty much up every night trying to determine the perfect balance of rewards that resonates with travelers and will be an adventure they crave. It's a tall order.

Consumer Expectations

Barad: It's different from five or 10 years ago. Hotels, in general, have much more expected from them than in the past. Consumers are savvy. They want employees to be responsive to their needs. Repeat guests want hotels to know them and their preferences.

It's much more demanding now and we have to respond accordingly with a one of a kind package tied to culture, architecture, and the uniqueness of the hotel.

Benchmarks?

Barad:

That's part of the development of the loyalty program we're working on now. It will be fairly complex. Within three months, we will unveil our loyalty program. We'll have traditional points available that can be used toward upgrades and free room nights, and a layer of experiential offerings alongside it.

Because we've been in the hotel business for more than 30 years, we're very much in touch and rely on our knowledge of our guests and give them offerings they want to see when they visit New York City.

Making New York City Less Intimidating

Barad: I think, for many travelers, New York City can be an intimidating city to visit. We're giving them an opportunity to pick and choose what they want to do, guide them along the way, and make it a little less scary.