

LODGING

60-SECOND PROFILE

BLACK BELT HOSPITALITY

Larry Broughton leverages martial arts training for the lodging business

In martial arts, leverage is essential to doing more with less. By the time the martial arts practitioner achieves black belt status, it's an ingrained attribute. For Larry Broughton, a longtime martial arts enthusiast, leverage works quite well in his work as a hotel executive. Broughton grew his boutique hotel company from two hotels in the pit of the 2002 recession to 20 today. How he got there is a virtual study in leverage that might well not have happened without such disciplined grounding.

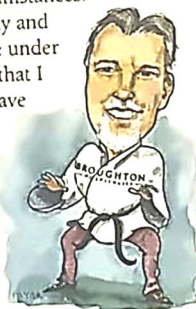
By age 19, Broughton had a black belt in karate and considered the sport a career path. Instead, a surprisingly high score on the Army's IQ test landed him a spot in its elite Special Forces division. "I became acutely aware that a small but highly trained, highly motivated team can outperform a larger, less motivated team in almost any circumstances. My experiences in the military awakened me to poverty and oppression that many people in the world experience under poor and sometimes evil leadership, and it was then that I became interested in political science. I decided to leave the military, go to college, and pursue a career in politics or international diplomacy."

But first, Broughton had to support himself through college and that need resulted in a night auditor's job at a seedy motel in San Francisco's Tenderloin District.

"I was there a few months when Chip Conley and his investment group acquired it with the intentions of renovating and repositioning the property," Broughton recalls. "It became the Phoenix Hotel, the first of the Joie de Vivre empire we see today. As the company grew, I became more interested in the hospitality industry and loved all the varied aspects of the business: leadership, customer service, team building, and niche marketing."

That took him into the 1990s, a time of restlessness and soul searching over his having left his dreams of a career in politics. He left Joie de Vivre to pursue a graduate degree at Stanford, but had to abandon that track when medical issues beset his parents. Instead, Broughton and his wife acquired a restaurant and a coffee shop and he began hotel consulting. "I fell in love with the hotel business again, and I was calling the shots."

In January 2001, Broughton founded Broughton Hospitality in Newport Beach, Calif., and soon acquired four properties in what was one of the worst economic climates for lodging. He says he's less concerned with the potential size of his company than with the quality of his portfolio.



CLOSE UP

Title: President/CEO

Residence: Irvine, Calif.

Family: Wife, two children

Education: Defense Language Institute (Russian), University of California, Santa Barbara (Political Science), Stanford University (Executive Education Program)

Philosophy: Success in business and in life is fleeting, while significance is eternal.

Activities: Spending time with my family, martial arts, watching Ultimate Fighting

Last Book read: The Go-Giver by Rob Burg and John David Mann

Last Movie Seen: Juno and Horton Hears a Who

Hotel Dislikes: When managers and employees are dismissive of guests, acting as though they would rather be somewhere else. Sadly, there is too much of this in our industry.

Hotel Likes: Unpretentious, hospitable, gracious service

MIKE STEN
MARRIOTT

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