



# DATO' PROF. MANDY CHEW SIOK CHENG

PRESIDENT, DIRECTOR & FOUNDER OF LEXIS HOTEL GROUP

# I am PAVING THE WAY for future generations of women in hospitality

**As the founder and director of Lexis Hotel Group, what inspired you to enter the hospitality industry, and how did your journey lead to the creation of Lexis Hotel Group?**

I am a seasoned hotelier with over 30 years in the hospitality industry, currently serving as the President, Director & Founder of Lexis Hotel Group, a collection of prestigious hotels and resorts in Malaysia. Throughout my career, I've gained extensive expertise through leadership roles at renowned hotel chains, including an 11-year tenure at Shangri-La Hotel Kuala Lumpur, and as CEO of Sunway International Hotels and Resorts, where I managed

2,786 hotel rooms across Malaysia, Vietnam, and Cambodia. I also held key positions at Metroplex Holdings, overseeing five hotels, a shopping mall, a timeshare company, and more, including managing inflight catering for AirAsia's inaugural flight. In 1995, driven by a passion for hospitality, I founded Lexis Hotel Group to offer luxurious yet practical accommodations for both leisure and business travelers. I became President in 2015, just in time for the soft opening of Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson, the group's flagship property. My leadership has helped establish Lexis as a premier niche brand in the industry.

**Can you discuss the challenges you've faced as a female leader in the traditionally male-dominated hospitality industry, and how you've overcome them to achieve success?**

As a female hotelier in an industry historically dominated by men, my journey to success has been both challenging and rewarding. Early in my career, climbing the corporate ladder felt like an insurmountable task, as I was often overlooked in favor of male counterparts, reflecting the gender bias that has long been prevalent in the hospitality sector. Rather than succumb to discouragement, I chose to shatter the glass ceiling through perseverance and determination. I sought mentorship from both male and female leaders, who provided invaluable support and guidance, and by consistently delivering results, I earned the respect and recognition of my peers. Navigating male-dominated spaces, from negotiating contracts to managing predominantly male teams, often meant working twice as hard to prove my worth and assert authority. However, I embraced a proactive approach centered on collaboration and inclusivity, fostering a culture where diverse perspectives were valued. Leveraging strengths such as empathy, adaptability, and emotional intelligence, I was able to build cohesive teams and drive meaningful change. Though the path was arduous, it has been deeply fulfilling, and today, as a trailblazer, I am committed to empowering women to rise to leadership positions and thrive in traditionally male-dominated industries, paving the way for future generations of women in hospitality.

**What sets Lexis Hotel Group apart from other players in the hospitality industry, and how do you maintain a competitive edge in the market?**

Lexis Hotel Group is renowned for its distinctive, one-of-a-kind water chalets and pool villas, offering travellers a unique blend of comfort, luxury, and personalised service. Each of the Group's

properties features its signature private pool in every room, including at Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson, Lexis Suites Penang, Grand Lexis Port Dickson, and Imperial Lexis Kuala Lumpur. Additionally, both Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson and Lexis Suites Penang offer the added luxury of a steam room in every guest room. The Group's flagship property, Lexis Hibiscus Port Dickson, is the world's only oceanfront resort of its kind, featuring 639 pool villas arranged in the shape of Malaysia's national flower, the Hibiscus. It is also a proud holder of two Guinness World Records for "The Most Swimming Pools In A Resort" and "The Most Overwater Villas In A Single Resort."

**How do you ensure that your hotels and resorts provides exceptional customer service and a memorable guest experience, and what steps do you take to continuously improve in this area?**

At Lexis Hotel Group, we are dedicated to delivering exceptional customer service and creating unforgettable guest experiences. From the moment a guest steps through our doors to their farewell, we understand the importance of every interaction. Our key strategies to ensure excellence include personalized service, where we treat each guest as an individual with unique needs, anticipating their preferences throughout their stay. We invest in rigorous staff training to embody our core values of hospitality, professionalism, and attentiveness, emphasizing empathy and active listening. We actively seek guest feedback through surveys and direct communication, using it to identify areas for improvement and address concerns promptly. Through continuous evaluation, we refine our processes and amenities to adapt to evolving guest needs. We also embrace technology, offering mobile check-in/out and state-of-the-art room amenities to enhance convenience and personalization. Additionally, we create moments of delight, from handwritten notes to complimentary upgrades, leaving lasting impressions on our guests. Our commitment extends to community engagement, providing authentic local experiences through tours and partnerships with nearby businesses. Ultimately, our goal is to exceed expectations and craft memorable stays that resonate long after our guests have left, all while fostering a culture of hospitality and continuous improvement.

**How do you approach leadership and management of your hotel staff, and what techniques do you use to motivate and engage your team?**

Aligned with Lexis Hotel Group's tagline, "Hospitality Is Our Passion," I am committed to inspiring my team to approach their work with enthusiasm and a positive mindset. When we love what we do, it transcends being just a job and becomes a fulfilling venture. We encourage our team to combine their individual expertise, creativity, and passion to work cohesively towards a common goal. In addition to providing opportunities for grooming and mentoring younger employees, we also recognize and reward the long-standing contributions of our dedicated staff. These efforts are part of Lexis Hotel Group's commitment to retaining and nurturing our talented workforce.

**How do you prioritize sustainability and environmental responsibility in your hotel's operations, and what steps have you taken to reduce the hotel's environmental footprint?**

Sustainability is at the heart of our operations, allowing guests to enjoy luxury with minimal environmental impact. We prioritize energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction and the use of eco-friendly alternatives like refillable dispensers and reusable bottles. By sourcing locally, using renewable materials, and engaging in community initiatives, we minimise our footprint while supporting the environment. From ensuring we eliminate harmful chemicals and materials in our operations, to focusing on a 70% local sourcing ethos for perishables to looking at larger efforts in energy savings such as EV facilities, solar power efforts and so





much more, we are committed to protecting the planet and creating exceptional guest experiences for a healthier future.

**Do you have any plans for the future growth and development of Lexis Hotel Group, both domestically and internationally?**

We are committed to growth and development, with a clear focus on expanding our footprint and elevating our brand presence. Domestically, we aim to strengthen our position by introducing flagship properties in urban centers and serene retreats in scenic locations, catering to diverse guest preferences while leveraging our expertise in key markets.

To broaden our appeal, we are diversifying our portfolio by exploring new segments such as boutique hotels and serviced residences, allowing us to reach a wider range of travelers.

Internationally, while still a smaller player compared to larger brands, we are focused on building success stories within our existing portfolio before strategically exploring

opportunities in regions with strong tourism potential. Driven by innovation, we create unique guest experiences through thoughtful design, cutting-edge technology, and sustainable practices. To enhance brand recognition, we actively participate in roadshows and international campaigns in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia and other partners, using targeted marketing, digital efforts, and influencer collaborations to attract discerning travelers who value our commitment to excellence.

**When you find the time, what do you do to relax?**

In my downtime, I enjoy both traveling and reading. I believe books offer valuable lessons, while travel allows us to immerse ourselves in different cultures, broadening our perspectives and inspiring creativity—an essential trait for staying ahead in the ever-evolving hospitality industry.

**Where do you love to travel to and do you have any favourite destinations?**

My passion for hospitality extends beyond my own properties, inspiring me to explore and appreciate the wonders of the world. Although my responsibilities often keep me grounded, I have been

fortunate to visit a diverse array of destinations, including New Orleans, US; Queenstown, New Zealand; Hokkaido, Japan, Switzerland, and Kenya, Africa — each holding a special place in my heart. What truly makes travel meaningful to me, however, is the chance to connect with people, immerse myself in different cultures, and create cherished memories that deepen my perspective on the world. As a hotelier, my love for travel fuels my commitment to delivering exceptional guest experiences, ensuring that every traveler who walks through our doors feels welcomed, valued, and inspired to embark on their own journeys of discovery.

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**Finally, what advice would you give to someone looking to establish themselves in the competitive world of hospitality, based on your own experiences?**

As a seasoned hotelier with extensive experience in the dynamic and competitive hospitality industry, my advice to those looking to establish themselves in this rewarding field is simple

yet vital: Passion and dedication are the foundation of success. To thrive in hospitality, you must genuinely love serving others and creating memorable experiences, embracing challenges with enthusiasm while always striving to deliver exceptional service. The industry is constantly evolving, so continuous learning is essential—stay informed about trends, emerging technologies, and best practices through training, certifications, and networking. Attention to detail is critical, whether it's ensuring a seamless check-in, anticipating guest needs, or maintaining impeccable cleanliness, as these small touches drive guest loyalty. Given the ever-changing nature of hospitality, adaptability and flexibility are key—be prepared to pivot in response to market shifts, guest preferences, and unforeseen challenges. Embracing diversity and inclusion is also crucial, as hospitality is a multicultural industry that thrives on respect, empathy, and understanding. Building strong relationships with guests, colleagues, and partners is at the heart of hospitality, so always listen, communicate openly, and go the extra mile to foster lasting connections. Finally, stay true to your core values, whether they relate to sustainability, service excellence, or community engagement, as they will differentiate your brand and build trust and loyalty in a competitive market.