

60-SECOND PROFILE

A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING

THG's Lara Latture is ready to do whatever is necessary.

Sometimes titles just don't say enough about a person. For Lara Latture, executive vice president and principal at Edmonds, Wash.-based The Hotel Group (THG), that is especially true. Latture's job entails overseeing all aspects of the operations at THG's 25 properties in nine states. That means she must be an expert in everything from human resources to marketing to technology to franchising. "If it is affiliated with running a hotel, then I'm kind of the gal," Latture says.

For the Chattanooga, Tenn., native, arriving at such an all-encompassing position in her career was a trip filled with unexpected turns and many miles of travel. Growing up, she admits, becoming a hotelier was far from her plans. In fact, it wasn't even in the picture. "I probably wanted to be a dancer," she recalls of her childhood dreams. Even when she grew up and married a hotelier and moved to the resort town of Galveston, Texas, the idea of working in the lodging industry still wasn't in her mind. "I got into it a little bit by accident," she says.

Her husband, David, grew to think his wife's personality would be a good fit for hotel sales. That was nearly two decades ago, and Latture decided to take a job that put her in the hospitality business—just not in the hotel business. She ended up as the director of sales and marketing at StarFleet Entertainment Yachts. "It was an individual who owned very high-end yachts that did specialty events for corporate clients," she says.

But the hotel industry soon beckoned as a number of hotel companies came calling for her services. She eventually ended up at THG as director of sales at a newly purchased property on Galveston Island. "It was pretty exciting because it was a new purchase for them and the ownership company at the time was pretty small," she says of her move to THG.

Little did she know she would become so much more at the hotel. At the time, a hurricane came through Galveston, and amongst the flooding and destruction, Latture found herself being one of the only people to make it onto the island. The storm was enough to make some of the transplants working at the hotel rethink whether they wanted to stay in the area. With the staff dwindled, Latture took on many jobs outside of her job description. "It's just that I was there, whether it was simply making bank deposits or dealing with renovations."

Her performance in that situation led to THG's bringing her to the company's corporate office to propose that she become the general manager of the hotel. "Frankly, I thought I'd hold the fort down for a while," she recalls. "After a few months, I eventually became the general

CLOSE UP

Title:	Executive Vice President & Principal, The Hotel Group
Residence:	Franklin, Tenn. (part-time), Edmonds, Wash. (part-time)
Family:	Husband (David), Son (Tucker), Dog (Lulu), Cat (Kitty)
Philosophy:	Revenue first, work hard, work efficient, and live with a sense of urgency.
Activities:	Decorating, reading historical fiction, golf cart driver, pool time, lake time, learning how to knit
Last Book Read:	<i>The Help</i> by Kathryn Stockett
Last Movies Seen:	<i>Sherlock Holmes</i> , <i>Precious</i>
Hotel Must Haves:	Clean rooms, dedicated staff, revenue!

manger. I was there for three years and then was promoted to a regional general manager, overseeing a few hotels in Texas."

But then, her family decided to move back to their native Tennessee. Normally, such a move would mean changing companies, especially because THG didn't have any hotels in the Tennessee. After consulting with her boss, THG President and CEO Doug Dreher, it was decided that she would not only stay on with the company, but also would take on more responsibility working from Tennessee.

Over her 12 years with the company, she has been promoted through several executive positions. Today, she serves in her current role working from Franklin, Tenn. Overseeing operations hotels in states such as Colorado, Montana, Alaska, and, even now in Tennessee, Latture finds herself being a hardcore road warrior.

Latture says the distance doesn't affect anything as far as company operations. "We joke that I seem to know who is calling in sick on the corporate staff, or what is going on in someone's life on the corporate staff before everyone else," she quips. ■

