

David Kong
President and CEO

David Kong is a hospitality industry leader and innovator with a distinguished 39-year career. Since 2004, he has served as president and CEO of Best Western International, the World's Largest Hotel Chain®. As CEO, he has enhanced the brand's image through a focus on customer care and by spearheading a descriptor strategy and launching the Best Western Plus™ and Best Western Premier® descriptors worldwide. Kong also has brought the chain its healthiest balance sheet.

Kong has also helped Best Western achieve a number of notable industry firsts. Best Western was the first brand to offer free high-speed Internet access at all of its North American properties; first to launch virtual tours for each of its North American hotels on the brand's Web site; first to offer electronic gift cards redeemable in various currencies and for free nights; and first to initiate strategic and exclusive partnerships with NASCAR® and Harley-Davidson®.

Kong's strong background in international development has helped make Best Western one of the largest, fastest-growing and most respected international hotel brands in Asia. With nearly 160 hotels under construction and in operation in Asia, Best Western was recognized as the best mid-scale hotel chain by TTG Asia in 2007, 2008 and 2009, and a Top 10 International Hotel Management Group by the China Tourist Hotels Association.

Before being named its CEO, Kong served as Best Western's executive vice president of international operations. He also distinguished himself in other areas of the company, leading strategic services, operations, marketing and global development departments.

His career includes experience with top hotel brands, including Hyatt Hotels, where he spent nearly 20 years in senior-level positions; Omni International; Regent International; and Hilton Hotels. Kong came to Best Western from KPMG Consulting's hospitality and real estate practice.

A long-time, active member of the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA), Kong is the chairman of AHLA for 2010, its centennial year. Kong also is a member of AH&LA's Board of Directors, Executive Committee, CEO Council and Government Affairs Council.

In 2010, Kong was appointed to the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board by Commerce Secretary Gary Locke. The board provides counsel to the Secretary on government policies and programs that affect the U.S. travel and tourism industry, and provides a forum for discussing and proposing solutions to industry-related concerns. 2010 marks the third consecutive year that Kong has served on this Board.

Kong completed the Executive Development Program at the Kellogg Graduate School of Management from Northwestern University and has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration in Travel Industry Management from the University of Hawaii.

He is a recent recipient of several prominent awards, including the J. Patrick Leahy Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association; the Award of

Excellence presented by the Asian American Hotel Owners Association; and the Lifetime Hotelier Leadership Award presented by Niagara University's College of Hospitality and Tourism Management.