

Interview

The Value of a Name

An Interview with Donald J. Trump,
President and Chief Executive Officer, The Trump Organization, New York



Donald J. Trump

EDITORS' NOTE A graduate of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Donald Trump is the author of seven best-selling books – *The Art of the Deal*, *Surviving at the Top*, *The Art of the Comeback*, *How to Get Rich*, *Think Like a Billionaire*, *Trump 101: The Way to Success*, *Why We Want You to be Rich*, as well as *The America We Deserve*. He serves on the board of the Police Athletic League, on the advisory boards of Lenox Hill Hospital and United Cerebral Palsy, as Chairman of the Donald J. Trump Foundation, and as Cochairman of the New York Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Fund. In January of 2007, Trump received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

COMPANY BRIEF: The New York-based Trump Organization (www.trump.com) is one of the largest real estate development companies in the world, and the Trump signature is synonymous with the most prestigious of addresses. Among them are the Trump Building at 40 Wall Street, the Trump World Tower opposite the United Nations, Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue, the Trump International Hotel & Tower at Columbus Circle, and the luxury residences Trump Palace and Trump Park Avenue. There are currently 33 real estate projects being developed nationally and internationally by The Trump Organization. In addition, the organization owns The Mar-a-Lago Club and Trump International Golf Club in Palm Beach Florida; Trump National Golf Clubs in Briarcliff Manor, New York, Bedminster, New

Jersey, and in Los Angeles; a major percentage of the publicly traded Trump Hotels & Casino Resorts in Atlantic City, New Jersey; and is co-owner with NBC of the Miss Universe Organization. He is also the co-producer of *The Apprentice*.

Today, you're almost better known for your entertainment ventures, such as "The Apprentice" and the Miss U.S.A. pageant, than you are for your real estate business. Does that shift in the public's thinking bother you?

Well, real estate is my primary business; but it took a little bit of a turn, because of the great success of *The Apprentice*, which became the number one show on television. It has been an amazing success. People started viewing me as an entertainer as opposed to a real estate person, although the people in the business know that my primary business is real estate, and that I do the highest-quality projects.

Real estate development today is a competitive field. How do you demonstrate what makes a Trump property unique?

The best thing I have, in terms of differentiation, is the name Trump. I put it on a building and the building just becomes more successful. We have a job in Waikiki, Hawaii, and it sold \$729 million worth of apartments in one day, which is a record in the United States. It literally took five hours to sell \$729 million worth of apartments. Other people are building in that location, and they're not having great luck. We've really set a very high standard. A lot of it has to do with the fact that people have confidence in me; they know if they buy an apartment in a Trump building, they have the best location, the best product, and the best layouts, and ceiling heights, window sizes, and fixtures – all of the things that go into making good real estate. We've had tremendous successes over the last number of years.

Is your outlook also strong for the New York City market?

If you, as a developer, can get land in New York City, that's the advantage. It's an island unto itself. It's a small sliver of land in the middle of two rivers and an ocean. It's not the same as other cities, where land is essentially unlimited. I think New York is going to continue to be strong. I'm doing a building in Chicago that has been very strong. I'm doing buildings all over the world, and the markets that I'm in, generally speaking, have been very strong.

You're building a few more Trump International Hotel & Tower buildings outside of New York. Are hotels something you are going to continue building?

We have a number of hotels and hotel/condominium buildings going up right now. It has been a great concept for us. It worked very well in Florida, and it worked very well in New York. We have the number-one hotel in the city at Trump International Hotel & Tower. We also do a lot of residential real estate, but the concept of the hotel/condominium has been good for us; for other people, it hasn't worked as well.

People equate the name Trump with high-end residences. Would you describe some of your current projects?

I just completed a building on 59th and Park Avenue, where the Hotel Delmonico was. It's called Trump Park Avenue, and it has been a huge success. I don't think people even realize how successful that building has been. Amazing people live in the building. The price per square foot is fantastic, and it has been a real winner. I recently built the tallest residential building in the world, opposite the United Nations, that received great reviews in the *New York Times*. It's called Trump World Tower, and that has been a great success. The jobs I've done have been very successful, and not only in New York. I have a 300-acre job in California, on two and a half miles of the ocean in Palos Verdes in Los Angeles. That has been an enormous success also. It's a golf course with spectacular mansions being built on it. My career has been very interesting. I started in Brooklyn and Queens, and now we're doing jobs all over the world.

And now you're in Las Vegas as well.

We're having phenomenal success in Las Vegas. I'm building a 68-story tower – the tallest building in Las Vegas, by far. It's just now being completed, and people will start moving in by January. It has been a tremendous success. It's totally sold out, and it's one of the most successful jobs that I've done.

You also enjoy a good presence in Korea. Is extending your reach outside of the U.S. an important initiative for you?

Korea has been an incredible success for Trump. We've made a lot of money in Korea, and we have great partners there. Throughout the world, the Trump name has become associated with the most successful jobs. Korea is a good example: The first building we did there



was so successful, we ended up building three more.

The Apprentice has been very successful. Do you think you'll do another season?

Well, they'd like me to continue it. It's now in its sixth season. Don't forget, this was supposed to be a one-season wonder; but it did so well in the ratings, that NBC asked me to do more. I'll decide whether or not I'll continue to do it. I had no idea it would be this successful, or last this long.

You have so many people approaching you about so many things. Is it challenging to decide when to attach your name to a project?

It is challenging, and sometimes I don't use my name; but usually, if I don't use my name, it's something I'm not as proud of, and something that isn't top of the line. I'll only use my name if it's going to be top of the line. My golf courses have been rated among the finest courses in the world, and the buildings I build are among the best. I'll only use the name if it's something really good.

Golf is one of your personal interests, and you've been able to make money in the business of developing courses. Is it important, at this stage, for you to do things that you enjoy?

Yes, I only want to do things that I like. I like golf, and I love building golf courses. There's something very beautiful about shaping land. I have a new course being built right now in Bedminster, New Jersey. I'm adding it on to the course that has already been built. So I'll have two courses there that will open in the fall, and they will be spectacular.

Your son and daughter have become active in your business ventures. Was it important to you for them to become involved? Has their involvement in your businesses gone smoothly?

I have very capable children. They're doing very well, and I expect they will continue to do well. They went to the Wharton School of

Finance, and they were terrific students. I have another son Eric who just joined us. So I'm three for three, when they reach a certain age. I'm very happy with what they've done.

And what about your one-year-old son? Do you have an age limit for when he can get involved in the business?

No, not an age limit, but I think he'll probably be like the others. He's a very strong boy – even at one you can tell. And he's very solid like his mother, so I think he'll be very good.

Do you feel like the public understands you, even with all of the attention you receive in the media?

I think people give me a lot of credit for

and alcohol problems, rather than turning my cheek, I fight her back and let the world know what she is – a total low form. I say that where other people tend not to, but that's just my personality. I'm very happy with it. Polls that have been taken show that I absolutely killed her. The public is very smart; they understand what's going on. I thought it would be appropriate to attack her, and I'm glad I did.

So many public figures say in the press, "I wish I could have a private life." Some people say that you enjoy being in the press. Is that true?

No, I don't. I have no choice. For example, LEADERS called me for this interview. I didn't call you. And as we speak, there are other reporters calling, wanting to get an interview. I get very high ratings, and I get a lot of media attention. If I didn't get that kind of hoopla, the media wouldn't be writing about me, and they wouldn't call me for interviews. They wouldn't care. But, for some reason, I do. You should explain the reason to me someday.

You always mention your father as your mentor. He was also a real estate mogul. Do you think he could have imagined the success you would have? Do you think he's looking down, smiling?

My father would be very happy. My father was a really terrific builder in Brooklyn and Queens. He would never have believed what has happened over the last 15 years. I don't think he would have ever imagined it, and he would have been very happy with it. He was an amazing guy in every sense of the word.

Loyalty seems to be very important to you. Is that a key ingredient for each of your employees?

Loyalty is key, and you can't tell who's going to be loyal by their face, color, or anything about them; you just don't know until they're tested. And bad times test them. In bad times, they're going to be loyal or disloyal. If they're not loyal once, they won't be loyal the second time either.

Loyalty is something that has always been very important to me, and without loyalty, you have nothing.

How do you balance your time today? How do you find the time for both business and your family?

Mostly, I work; but I take time off in Palm Beach and various places, but very little, because I love what I do. I always tell people, when I lecture at the Learning Annex, you have to love what you do. If you don't love it, you'll never be successful at it. I really love what I do, so I don't take very many vacations. Frankly, I don't enjoy a vacation as much as what I'm doing. ●



Donald Trump contemplates real estate dominance as a toddler (left); The current Donald with two of his children, Ivanka and Donald Jr.

what I've done. I think people don't realize how big I am in the world of real estate. I think they view *The Apprentice* one way – it's entertainment, and some articles were written that were false, and people tended to believe them. But I don't think people realize how massive the company is. It has really become a large company, and a very successful one.

And what about your much-publicized disagreement with Rosie O'Donnell? It would seem you have bigger, more important things to worry about.

When a slob like Rosie O'Donnell attacks me for giving Miss U.S.A., Tara Conner, a second chance when she admitted to having drug