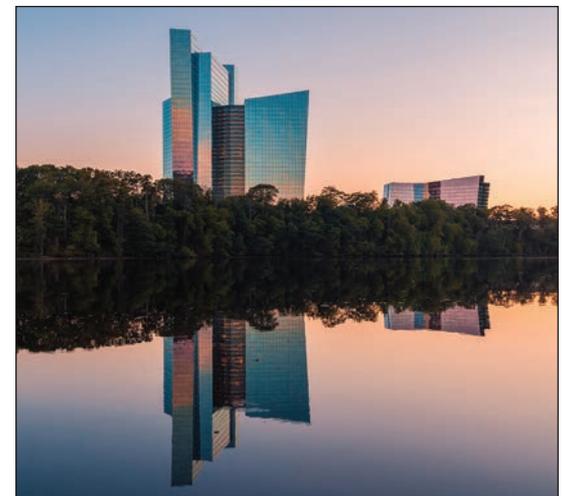




## An Entertainment Destination



Mohegan Sun towers in Uncasville, Connecticut (above);  
Mohegan Sun Arena (Left)

An Interview with Mario Kontomerkos,  
Chief Executive Officer, Mohegan Gaming and Entertainment

**EDITORS' NOTE** Mario Kontomerkos joined Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment in September 2011 as Chief Financial Officer. As CFO, he oversaw all of the finance matters for Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment's growing businesses. In October 2017, he assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer to focus on corporate diversification. His career path evolved through various key financial, research and analytical roles with companies such as Penn National Gaming, Magnetar Capital LLC, J.P. Morgan Securities, Lehman Brothers and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. Kontomerkos' experience also includes service as a consultant for TPG Capital LLC on the acquisition of Harrah's Entertainment, the largest leveraged buyout in the history of the gaming industry. Kontomerkos holds a B.S. degree from Cornell University.



Mario Kontomerkos

**COMPANY BRIEF** In 1996, Mohegan Sun opened in Connecticut and quickly became one of the world's largest casinos. It combined many different elements, from dining and shopping to professional sports and arena-sized shows, into a whole new kind of entertainment destination. Based on its success, Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment ([mohegaming.com](http://mohegaming.com)) has brought this experience to new markets across the globe including the recently opened ilani Resort in Washington State and the Inspire Integrated Entertainment Resort under development in South Korea, which will be the first resort in the world with its own private air terminal. Each destination is different but all share the unique vision of Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment which is to transcend gaming while transforming entertainment into a more immersive, exhilarating experience.

**Will you provide an overview of Mohegan Gaming & Entertainment and how you define your role?**

My role involves the oversight of an organization that started 22 years ago in Connecticut and that is growing rapidly today. It has been a fantastic story for the Mohegan Tribe that has created an entertainment destination like no other in a very remote area of the state.

That spurred other opportunities for growth, so they expanded into Pennsylvania. They were then able to take their expertise to Atlantic City and to the West Coast north of Portland, Oregon, as

well as to Louisiana and Korea. The latest acquisition is in Niagara Falls, which is another large opportunity for us.

We look to ensure that the company is guided in a way that allows for the sustainability of this tribe for a very long time. The thought process that we take in this company is very unusual – we make decisions for the next generations as opposed to the next quarter.

I'm also responsible for carrying out our business in a way that is commensurate with the values of the Mohegan Tribe. This is probably the most important thing I do.

**Is there consistency in each of the properties or are the gaming and entertainment offerings customized to the specific market?**

There are no extreme differences. However, every market does have different tastes and considerations, so we try to customize the gaming and entertainment experiences in a way that best appeals to the local demographic. This is apparent both in the design and in the way we advertise and handle our direct mail marketing.

There is one major consistency, which is in the way we go about interacting with our guests and our employees, as well as our vendors. We use an approach that looks at the world in the most cooperative and friendly way we can.

**Is differentiation challenging in the industry?**

It's not easy, especially when we're opening a new property 7,000 miles away in a remote country with a different language and different customs and cultures.

However, we believe strongly in what we're creating, so we can make it stand out. It's worth the effort for us.

**As you grow and expand into new markets, how critical is it to understand different cultures?**

This might be the most critical thing we do. We spend a lot of time, money and resources making sure that we fully understand the culture in a country like Korea. It would be a mistake to go into a foreign country thinking that we're going to take over and do things our way. This doesn't work very well.

What does work well is spending time trying to understand the other culture and asking them to spend time understanding ours. This takes a lot more time than people are used to spending. However, we make that investment and we think that pays dividends down the road.

We will hire people that are tasked with making sure we're not missing something culturally. We also send team members who grew up in Connecticut to all of our properties to ensure that our values and culture are being propagated in other markets.

**Will you discuss the investment Mohegan makes in its workforce and how important this has been to maintaining service standards?**

It's important. We invest in many ways. There is an enormous ongoing effort driven by the fact that the company is expanding so quickly that we must make sure things are standardized.

We make sure that all of our properties meet and discuss what it means to be part of the Mohegan organization and then propagate this via consistent language to make sure that everyone understands.

**Is the message well understood about the many positive things the gaming industry does and has the industry done an effective job in making sure this positive story gets out?**

It depends. In Connecticut, that story has been told very well. Folks understand that the number of direct jobs created between the two gaming facilities alone in this state is somewhere around 12,000. The direct contributions that the two tribes make to the state has totaled hundreds of millions of dollars per year for several years now.

In other states or countries, where our industry is new, it takes a lot of time and investment to make sure that folks understand. It's often helpful for policy-makers from other jurisdictions to come to Connecticut to see what is happening here. When they observe the solid base of employment and opportunity we give people and the economic benefits created by that, they begin to understand what this business is about.

This is primarily an entertainment business and the vast majority of it is non-gaming.

**Are you able to enjoy the process and celebrate the wins or are you always looking ahead?**

We do take a chance to celebrate, but there is a very strong drive enterprise-wide to be able to create something that is even more special and more worldwide than it already is. We're having a positive effect on many people so we're spending time looking to the future. ●