

Defining Leadership

An Interview with Anthony Scaramucci, Founder and Co-Managing Partner, SkyBridge Capital

EDITORS' NOTE Anthony Scaramucci is also the author of four books: *The Little Book of Hedge Funds*, *Goodbye Gordon Gekko*, *Hopping Over the Rabbit Hole* and *Trump: The Blue-Collar President*. Prior to founding SkyBridge in 2005, Scaramucci co-founded investment partnership Oscar Capital Management, which was sold to Neuberger Berman in 2001. Earlier, he was a vice president in Private Wealth Management at Goldman Sachs & Co. In 2016, Scaramucci was ranked #85 in *Worth* magazine's *Power 100: The 100 Most Powerful People in Global Finance*. In 2011, he received Ernst & Young's "Entrepreneur Of The Year® – New York" Award in the Financial Services category. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a board member of The Brain Tumor Foundation and Business Executives for National Security (BENS), and a Trustee of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Foundation. He was a member of the New York City Financial Services Advisory Committee from 2007 to 2012. In November 2016, he was named to President-Elect Trump's 16-person Presidential Transition Team Executive Committee. In June 2017, he was named the Chief Strategy Officer of the EXIM Bank. He served as the White House Communications Director for a period in July 2017. Scaramucci holds a BA degree in economics from Tufts University and a JD from Harvard Law School.



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FIRM BRIEF SkyBridge Capital (skybridge.com) is a global investment firm with approximately \$9.5 billion in assets under management or advisement as of July 30, 2019. The firm offers hedge fund investing solutions that address a wide range of market participants from individual investors to large institutions. SkyBridge takes a high-conviction approach to alpha generation, expressed through a thematic and opportunistic investment style. The firm manages multi-strategy funds of hedge funds and customized separate account portfolios, and provides hedge fund advisory services. SkyBridge also produces a large annual conference in the U.S. and Asia known as the SkyBridge Alternatives Conference (SALT). Headquartered in New York, the firm also has a presence in Seoul, London and Palm Beach.

The world is fighting a public health crisis that is impacting all countries and their citizens. The pandemic is being fought on the front lines by healthcare workers, first responders, those providing supplies and meals, transportation workers and all other essential workers. What do you say to these true leaders and heroes that are risking their lives to protect others?

The first thing we have to say to our brave essential workers is thank you. The situation, especially in the early days of the pandemic, was fraught with risks and uncertainty. We had a deadly disease spreading like wildfire and

nobody knew anything about it. COVID-19 was killing people by the thousands, but instead of shrinking, these brave men and women ran toward the gunfire in order to save lives. Many paid the ultimate sacrifice with their own lives. The courage shown by essential workers during the pandemic has reminded us about the strength of the human spirit and American spirit. At some point, we must find an appropriate way to honor and compensate these brave souls for their immense heroism.

SkyBridge is a purpose-driven firm with a long history of supporting its employees, clients and communities. How has SkyBridge adapted its business and the way it works during this unprecedented time in order to continue to effectively support its employees, clients and communities?

In terms of our own business, we closed our office on March 9 - before the city or state closure orders - both to protect our team members and their families, but also to send a signal to other business leaders that we needed to take the virus seriously. We started allowing a very limited number of workers to return to the office after Labor Day on a completely voluntary basis, but will not ask people to come back until the virus is basically extinguished. We've erred toward overcommunicating with clients during the pandemic due to the anxiety that everyone was experiencing not only around their health, but also their finances. The worst thing an investor can do during periods of distress is make an emotional decision, and we feel great about how we've kept clients invested. From a community standpoint, we've helped lead several

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community events to raise funds for charities addressing food insecurity related to COVID-19. It was devastating to see food banks with mile-long lines, so we tried to do what we could to make sure that, at the very least, families had food on the table.

How has SkyBridge’s team changed the way they work in order to be effective with the changes that have been necessary for all businesses to make and how proud are you to see the resilience of your team?

I give a ton of credit to our team, especially on the technology and operations side, for flipping the switch from a completely in-person work environment to a fully-digital scenario essentially overnight. As a multi-manager alternative investment firm, there is a ton of rigorous due diligence and accounting attention to detail that’s necessary for us to meet our fiduciary standard to clients. We haven’t skipped a beat and I think it’s a testament to our culture. In the same way we’ve tried to overcommunicate with clients, we’ve also tried to overcommunicate internally as well. Every team within the firm has at least a brief daily teleconference to ensure that we’re on the same page.

There is a great deal of discussion about businesses reopening in a “new normal.” What is your outlook for what this new normal may look like and how is SkyBridge preparing for the next stage in this crisis?

The quarantine has opened everyone’s eyes to what’s possible when you fully embrace the technology tools at our disposal. Especially with older workers, pre-pandemic there was some resistance to teleconferencing or other

digital collaboration tools, but the work-from-home period has forced everyone to get comfortable with those technologies. While you can never replace the creative value and personal connection of face-to-face human interaction, I think you’ll see a hybrid work environment moving forward. Business travel is unlikely to return to previous levels this decade, if ever. We’ll encourage our team members to come into the office when it’s safe, but also continue to stay connected with tools we’ve grown comfortable with during the quarantine.

SkyBridge is headquartered in New York City which has been heavily impacted by the pandemic. What are the keys to New York City’s recovery and how critical is it for there to be a strong public/private partnership to ensure a safe and effective reopening of New York City?

New York has a unique resilience. 9/11 is an obvious example. COVID-19 will be the latest chapter. I almost laughed when I read some of the think-pieces about the death of New York City as a result of the pandemic. The city will bounce back, but it will require the type of leadership and togetherness that we saw post 9/11. As a business owner, the well-being of our colleagues and clients is the top priority, but we do feel a desire to get people back to the office because of the secondary benefit it has for the city. We pay for lunch every day for our team, and nearby restaurants have missed out on that revenue. That’s just one example. I think we need to come together to extinguish the virus, and then come together with a plan to get back to business.

You have built a career as a business leader and have also served in government. How concerned are you about the partisanship in the country today and what needs to be done to bring the country together?

What most concerns me about the environment we’re in is the willingness to accept an erosion in our democratic principles for the sake of partisan gain. We are naive to think that because the United States has grown into the dominant world superpower over the last 240 years that our empire is immune to failure. We need to dial back the rhetoric and deescalate the conflict that’s boiling to the surface in society today. Part of that is driven by the economic inequality that has developed due to factors like technological innovation and globalization, but we need energetic public/private solutions to bridge the gap.

During this difficult and uncertain time, what are you telling your people and what would you say to young people across the country who are deeply concerned and uncertain about the future?

You have to be honest with people. Most human beings have a unique ability to tell when they’re being lied to or gaslighted. We are facing serious challenges as a country and as a world. To overcome them, we need to work harder to build consensus and safeguard our institutions. We can no longer take for granted our position as the dominant economic and geopolitical player on the world stage. If we’re going to maintain and grow our quality of life, we need to start thinking differently about how we live and work together. With that being said, the United States of America is the greatest country in the world. If you were born here or immigrated here, you hit the lottery. But we can’t take that for granted any longer. ●

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