

# All About People

An Interview with Jerry I. Speyer,  
Chairman and co-Chief Executive Officer, Tishman Speyer

**EDITORS' NOTE** Jerry Speyer is one of the two founding partners of the company. He is Chairman of the Museum of Modern Art and Vice Chair of New York-Presbyterian Hospital. He is the former Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York; Chairman Emeritus of Columbia University; Chairman Emeritus of the Real Estate Board of New York; Chair Emeritus, Partnership for New York City; and past President of the Board of Trustees of the Dalton



Jerry I. Speyer

School. Speyer's other board affiliations include Yankee Global Enterprises, Columbia Business School Board of Overseers, National September 11 Memorial & Museum, the National Committee on United States-China Relations, and the Kennedy Center Corporate Fund Board. Speyer is a Trustee of the Städel Museum, Frankfurt, Germany. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Business Roundtable. Speyer graduated from Columbia College and received an M.B.A. from Columbia University Graduate School of Business.

**COMPANY BRIEF** Tishman Speyer (*tishmanspeyer.com*) is one of the leading developers, owners, operators, and asset managers of first class real estate worldwide. Active across North America, Europe, South America, and Asia, Tishman Speyer is relied upon by many of the world's most prestigious corporations to meet their office space needs. The firm has acquired, developed, and/or managed more than 370 projects and a portfolio of more than 133 million square feet with a total value of approximately \$73 billion since its founding in 1978. Signature assets include New York's Rockefeller Center and the Chrysler Center, São Paulo's Torre Norte, Ventura Corporate Towers in Rio de Janeiro, and OpernTurm in Frankfurt. Tishman Speyer also has projects at different stages of development in Brasília, Chengdu, Frankfurt, Gurgaon, Hyderabad, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, San Francisco, São Paulo, Shanghai, Suzhou, and Tianjin.

**Is the 2.5 percent growth in the U.S. real growth today that can drive real estate?**

The real estate market is tied to the economy, and the ups and downs of the economy.

**Do you see the U.S. as an opportunity today? How focused are you on this market?**

Very focused. All the gateway cities are of great interest to us.

**Would you talk about some of the major U.S. projects that you're working on?**

We have projects in different parts of the country in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Boston, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. We are busy with both residential and office properties.

**In some of those major projects, you're also partnering. What value does partnering bring and is that a more common model for you?**

Yes. Projects have grown so large that in order to do the number of projects we do, we require partners to work with us.

**There is a lot of development going on in New York City, but most of it is on the high-end residential side. With these high price points, are we going to lose the diversity the city is known for?**

We're not in any risk of losing the diversity because there is plenty of opportunity to deal with the needs of people from a cross-section of incomes in New York. Hopefully, the affordable housing program announced will go a long way towards dealing with the housing issue.

**Could you ever have imagined that the outer boroughs would have become what they have?**

The wonderful thing about New York City is that the boroughs and the city reinvent themselves regularly. The boroughs are a key part of our reinvention.

**On the commercial side, how much can be done with existing product to make sure it remains relevant and meets the needs of new, entrepreneurial companies? Can existing product compete with what is coming on the market?**

Existing properties always compete with new construction. It's just part of the reinvention in New York. We take old space, renovate it, and create different kinds of usage. Today, one of the things that is very interesting is the notion of how we think about creative space.

I don't think that's an issue. Different companies have different needs and desires, so there is demand for old and new space.

**Are sustainable practices just a given today? How far do you need to go to be competitive?**

If one is in the business of creating and owning first-class buildings, and that is defined in different ways depending on the kind of buildings we're talking about, one has to be keen on green buildings, so sustainability has to be part of every decision when one is acquiring a building or developing a building.

**With a slowdown to 6 to 7 percent growth in China, should we expect that this is their new norm?**

Sure, growth is down, but every American businessperson would say they would love to see growth of that magnitude in the U.S.

**How much of a focus has China been for you and do you currently have a number of projects taking place there.**

It's a big focus and we continue to believe in the growth in China, and the opportunities that exist there.

**How about Brazil, which has seen some bumps in the road? What is your outlook for that market?**

Long term, Brazil will be a very interesting place for investment and I have no doubt that it will continue to be a place where Tishman Speyer will want to invest.

**You've committed much of your time to the Partnership for New York City, having been Chairman twice. Today, the Partnership is as relevant as ever in getting the business community engaged. What keeps it so relevant and how critical a role does it play in addressing the needs of the city?**

It's an organization that represents a point of view, and it has been material to lots of positive developments in New York. It's important to keep that organization going because it's really the only major voice of business in New York.

**At a certain size and scale, how hard is it to keep the family feel for the firm?**

It's part of the company's history.

**It comes back to the people?**

Always. People are key to everything we do. ●