



BUSINESS DAY | WORKSPACE

# A Focus on Fitness, and a Passion for the Packers

By PATRICIA R. OLSEN JAN. 31, 2015

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## Looking inward

We moved into this headquarters building two or three years ago. My office, on the sixth floor, overlooks the Harbor Point Marina. I have a great view of Long Island Sound. It's refreshing to come in and see that on a sunny day, but I don't spend much time looking out. I'm focused inward in the office, both literally and figuratively.

### 1. Standing tall

I've had a standing desk for almost my entire career at Starwood, which owns Sheraton. I also use a fitness ball, which is good for stretching and for your core and lower back.

### Fitness factor

I try to stay fit, so I go to the gym at 5:30 a.m. for an hour, before I go to the office. During the day I also use a Power Plate, which we're rolling out in our hotel gyms now. It's a vibrating exercise platform that allows you to work out or stretch more efficiently. I like relieving tightness and stress with it later in the day. Our team members also come in and use it.

### 2. A gym anywhere

Our Sheraton Gym in a Bag, which includes a foam roller, a massage stick and resistance bands, is also part of my routine. I use the roller and stick the most. I'll grab the bands as another way to stretch.

### 3. Keeping it healthy

I used to keep unhealthy snacks in the refrigerator in my office. Now I keep it stocked with Greek yogurt and sparkling water, and I have soft drinks and Vitaminwater for guests. Having a stocked refrigerator is just part of being in the hospitality business. My assistant goes on a restocking run every week.

### **Lunch ritual**

Three days a week, I grab lunch from the cafeteria and bring it back to the office, and once a week we eat as a team. The other day is hit or miss. My favorite lunch is from Dinosaur Bar-B-Que, a restaurant that's a stone's throw from the office.

### **4. Flights of fancy**

As a young man, I wanted to be a Navy fighter pilot, but I flunked the color part of the vision test. My wife found Air Combat USA, an organization that allows people to actually fly in and pilot a naval training plane that simulates fighter jet maneuvers, and I took a couple of flights. It's now my hobby. Once, like a student driver, I sat next to a pilot and got to fly the plane in a simulated dogfight. I have two photos of the planes on my wall. In one, a plane is flying straight up, and in the other, I'm piloting a plane.

### **5. Always a Cheesehead**

One of my valued possessions is a signed football from Brett Favre from when he played with the Green Bay Packers. I grew up in Milwaukee. I bleed green and gold; I'm a Cheesehead and proud of it. I also have a football signed by Bart Starr, a Packer legend from the 1960s. I placed a miniature Green Bay Packer helmet in front of the balls.

### **Striking a balance**

I take work home more often than I stay late. I might leave the office at 6 p.m. and have a conference call with our China team at 8. Or, I'll have an early-morning meeting with a team in Europe after I work out, before I go to the office. We're a global company, but we try to create balance and a stress-free environment.

### **Gather round**

I hold team meetings virtually every day. We usually meet in my office, and I encourage my team and my extended team to use the space for meetings

when I'm traveling.

### **Rules for success**

One of the rules for being on my team is that you have to be smarter than me, and many would say that's not that difficult. I surround myself with people who are smart and self-motivated. My job is to keep them focused and inspired and to empower them to perform at their best.

I try to remove obstacles to getting the job done, and most important, I want them to work without fear of failure. The one thing I try to do every day is make them laugh, just to keep things light.

Interview conducted by Patricia R. Olsen. Comments have been edited and condensed.

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