



## Michael Heistein

Senior Vice President & Corporate Compliance Officer  
Wyndham Hotels & Resorts

Michael was an associate in Private Equity at Goodwin from 2001 – 2007. He has been at Wyndham since 2007 where he has handled everything from M&A, contracts and procurement to advising executive leadership and the Board of Directors on transactions and corporate governance matters.

---

### Career Path

**Q: You have been in-house for about 15 years now. What has your career trajectory been like since you left Goodwin?**

**A:** When I left Goodwin, I did not know how long I would be at Wyndham, but I remember hoping that I would make it at least half as long as I had been at the firm – about 3 years – so that it did not look like I was jumping from job to job. 15 years later I am still here so I guess I accomplished that goal! I have been fortunate to have had a variety of positions of increasing responsibility throughout my in-house career.

I was hired into the corporate group where I primarily handled M&A, corporate secretary work and general corporate work. Then I had the opportunity to go to the hotel business unit where I gained significant operations experience. I wore several hats during this time, including providing legal support to our hotel management team. When the hotel group spun out of the larger Wyndham Worldwide Corporation in 2018, I was asked to lead the legal team responsible for M&A, commercial and IT contracts, procurement and sourcing.

I was then given the opportunity to rejoin and lead the corporate group. Our group's purview has expanded over time and now covers corporate, M&A, securities, governance, investor relations, treasury, capital markets, executive compensation, subsidiary maintenance, privacy and compliance. It has been great to have had such a variety of roles, each of which has allowed me to take on a new challenge, understand the business better and work with some great people.

**Q: What made you go in-house and what do you enjoy about it?**

**A:** It was a tough decision for me. I loved what I was doing and who I was working with at the firm, but I was approached with the opportunity to go in-house, and I thought that, for me and my personality, in-house would be a good fit. I like being involved in deals from the initial stages through consummation and integration. On a macro level, I enjoy being part of the business, developing relationships throughout the organization and helping the company achieve its strategic goals and objectives.

**Q: How did working at Goodwin prepare you to move in house?**

**A:** I learned so much during my time at Goodwin and I will forever be grateful to the partners and associates that spent the time to teach me everything from how to draft and negotiate complex agreements and conduct due diligence to soft skills, including how to effectively communicate with clients and other lawyers. Not only did this training prepare me technically for my current role, but it also taught me how to manage and lead others.

## In-House Perspective

**Q: What does a typical day in-house look like for you?**

**A:** I am not sure there is a typical day, but that is what keeps it interesting. Most of the time there are multiple projects going on simultaneously and you never know who is going to stop by or call you. I try to prioritize the various projects so the team stays focused and we can keep track of all the moving parts. I also have standing meetings with my team so that we can talk about their workload and I can help clear roadblocks, answer questions and advance the ball. In between all of that I try to keep up with email, which is a never-ending battle!

**Q: What has made you continue to choose Wyndham as an institution throughout the years?**

**A:** I have had several different roles within the organization, which has allowed me to continuously grow and develop. I have also played a part in some of the company's transformational transactions, which, in addition to helping the company, has been personally fulfilling. It has been exciting to be a part of the company's growth and evolution.

## Career Advice

**Q: What has been the best piece of career advice you think you have gotten over the years?**

**A:** Be open to taking on new opportunities. While it can be daunting to take on something new, it is important for growth and advancement. I will admit that, early in my career, I did not always follow this advice as I was reluctant to take on a new role or project if I did not know if I could deliver on it. However, if you are in an environment that is set up to help you succeed, including having people that you can go to for support (at least in the early stages until you find your footing), then I would recommend stretching for it.

One other piece of basic but practical advice I would like to share is to always try to understand the bigger picture, especially as a junior associate. Sometimes you may get a very discrete task and the person who is giving it to you may not tell you much about the overall transaction because they do not realize that you do not have all of the background. I would encourage people to ask questions and lots of them. More often than not, I have found that senior lawyers are willing to spend the time to explain things to junior members of the team, especially when you express interest and curiosity. Even if you have to slow down for a moment, a broader knowledge of the transaction will end up paying back in the long run because you will be able to do your job better and more efficiently.

## Get to Know Me

**Q: What do you like to do outside of work and are you passionate about?**

**A:** Anything with my family. Lately we have been doing some hiking, biking and exploring the outdoors. From a work perspective, I am passionate about leading great teams and making sure we generate a superior work product, exceed expectations and help our organization achieve its strategic goals.

**Q: As you reflect back on your time at Goodwin, is there anything that stands out or a memory that you will take away with you?**

**A:** I have a lot of fond memories of the firm. It was a time of tremendous learning and growth. I feel fortunate to have worked with partners and associates that shared their knowledge and helped me develop into a better lawyer. We all worked extremely hard, but we did it together, formed relationships that have continued to this day and had some fun along the way.

### Hear more of what we have to say.

To learn more about our Alumni Program and what our alumni are up to, please visit [goodwinlaw.com/alumni](https://goodwinlaw.com/alumni).

**Meet us at the intersection of capital and innovation: [goodwinlaw.com](https://goodwinlaw.com)**

This informational piece, which may be considered advertising under the ethical rules of certain jurisdictions, is provided on the understanding that it does not constitute the rendering of legal advice or other professional advice by Goodwin Procter or its lawyers. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome. Goodwin Procter is an international legal practice carried on by Goodwin Procter LLP and its affiliated entities. For further information about our offices and the regulatory regimes that apply to them, please refer to [goodwinlaw.com/Legal-Notices](https://goodwinlaw.com/Legal-Notices). © 2023 Goodwin Procter. All rights reserved.

