



**FOUR SEASONS**  
*Hotels and Resorts*

**Corporate Office** 1165 Leslie Street Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3C 2K8 T. 1 (416) 449-1750 F. 1 (416) 441-4374

## Isadore Sharp



### Founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

*"The reason for our success is no secret. It comes down to one single principle that transcends time and geography, religion and culture. It's the Golden Rule – the simple idea that if you treat people well, the way you would like to be treated, they will do the same."*

"There was no vision, there was no grand dream," says Issy, reflecting on the nearly 50 years since the first Four Seasons – a modest motor hotel – opened in downtown Toronto. "But there has always been a consistent thread and it propels us forward today, as we continue to grow globally, and that's service."

It may seem obvious that in the hotel business, service is a primary objective, but it is how that service is delivered that sets Four Seasons apart. "One way to characterise Four Seasons service would be to call it an exchange of mutual respect performed with an attitude of kindness."

Defining and enforcing the company culture was one of four key strategic decisions made in the formative years of Four Seasons history. "I sat down with our communications experts and wrote down the fundamentals of our culture, which is based on the Golden Rule – to treat others as you wish to be treated," says Issy. "A lot of companies talk about having a culture, but we knew we had to walk the talk if we expected it to thrive in our hotels."

The other key decisions include a focus on managing only medium-sized hotels of exceptional quality; to manage, rather than own, those hotels; and to make service the brand's distinguishing edge.

More recently, in 2007, another milestone decision was made that will protect the integrity of the brand well into the future. Sharp, along with a group of like-minded investors, took the company private.

"Four Seasons today is a brand that people equate with exceptional experiences and the lifelong memories that come with them," says Issy. "The business decisions we've made over the past five decades ensure that Four Seasons will continue to hold this esteemed position for decades to come."

## Career Highlights

- Authored a book in 2009 detailing the history and philosophy of the company entitled **"Four Seasons: The Story of a Business Philosophy"**
- Founding of Four Seasons Hotels: built and opened the first Four Seasons, a 125-room motor hotel, in Toronto, Canada, in 1961 after founding the company the previous year
- Previously: worked with his father, Max Sharp, in the construction business
- Education: graduated in architecture from Ryerson Institute of Technology, 1952

---

## Directorships

- Honorary Director of Scotiabank
- Director of Clairvest Group Inc.

---

## Community Involvement

- Director of the National Terry Fox Run; initiated the corporate sponsorship programme supporting the Terry Fox Marathon of Hope and is Founder of the annual Terry Fox Run programme
- Director of Canadian Unity Council
- Governor of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews
- Honorary Officer of the Board of Directors, Mount Sinai Hospital
- First recipient of the Ruth Hartman Frankel Humanitarian Award for work on behalf of the Canadian Cancer Society, 1983

---

## Awards and Honours

- Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from York University, 2009
- Lifetime Achievement Award, International Hotel Investment Fund, 2009
- Companion to the Order of the Canadian Business Hall of Fame, 2008 (first inducted in 1998)
- Marketing Hall of Legends Canada, Visionary category, 2008
- Ivey Business Leader Award by the Ivey Alumni Association/Toronto, 2006
- Outstanding Philanthropist Award, Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Greater Toronto Chapter, 2005
- Honorary Associate Award, The Conference Board of Canada, 2005
- Lifetime Achievement Award, American Lodging Investment Summit (ALIS), 2005
- Canadian Hotel Industry Icon Award at the Canadian Hotel Investment Conference, 2005
- Ontario Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year Program's Lifetime Achievement Award, 2003
- Honorary Doctor of Commerce degree from Ryerson University, 2003 (Ryerson University Fellowship, 1983)
- International Distinguished Entrepreneur Award by I.H. Asper School of Business of the University of Manitoba, 1999
- Distinguished Service Award in International Rehabilitation, from New York-based World Rehabilitation Fund, 1999
- Ryerson Alumni Award of Distinction, which recognises outstanding contributions of graduates of Ryerson Polytechnical University to business and community life, 1998
- Honorary Doctor of Laws degree by the University of Toronto, 1994
- Officer of the Order of Canada, 1993
- CEO of the Year, *Financial Post Magazine*, 1992
- Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Guelph, 1992

---

## Personal Insights

- Family: Issy and his wife, Rosalie Wise Sharp, live in Toronto; they have three sons, Jordan, Gregory and Anthony; the Sharps lost a fourth son, Christopher, to cancer in 1978
- Where he got the now-famous name: inspired by a famous hotel, Vier Jahreszeiten in Hamburg, which translates as Four Seasons