

Danny Meyer

CEO - Union Square Hospitality Group

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

Topics

- Authors
- Chefs/Culinary Arts/Hospitality
- Customer Relations & Experience
- Entrepreneurs
- Leadership

About Danny Meyer

Born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, Danny Meyer grew up in a family that relished great food and hospitality. Thanks to his father's travel business, which designed custom European trips, Danny spent much of his childhood eating, visiting near and far-off places, and sowing the seeds for his future passion. In 1985, at the age of 27, Danny opened his first restaurant, Union Square Cafe, launching what would become a lifelong career in hospitality.

Thirty years later, Danny's Union Square Hospitality Group (USHG) comprises some of New York's most beloved and acclaimed restaurants, including Gramercy Tavern, The Modern, Maialino, and more. Danny and USHG founded Shake Shack, the modern-day "roadside" burger restaurant, which became a public company in 2015. USHG also offers large-scale event services, foodservice solutions for public and private institutions, industry consulting, and educational programming.

Under Danny's leadership, USHG is renowned not only for its acclaimed restaurants but also for its distinctive and celebrated culture of Enlightened Hospitality. This guiding principle of prioritizing employees first and foremost has driven and shaped USHG's ongoing evolution from a small group of restaurants into a multi-faceted hospitality organization.

Danny and USHG's diverse ventures have added to the hospitality dialogue in many contexts including dining options in museums, sports arenas, and cultural institutions, as well as prescient investments in burgeoning neighborhoods. In 2016, USHG launched a pioneering initiative to eliminate tipping throughout its New York restaurants. This new way of business, called Hospitality Included, is designed to compensate the restaurant team more equitably and professionally, while providing clear paths for professional advancement.

Danny's groundbreaking business book, *Setting the Table* (HarperCollins, 2006), a New York Times Bestseller, articulates a set of signature business and life principles that translate to a wide range of industries. A celebrated speaker and educator, Danny has set industry standards in areas such as hiring practices, innovative leadership, and corporate responsibility and addresses a wide range of audiences on such topics around the country.

Danny has been generously recognized for his leadership, business achievements, and humanitarianism, including the 2017 Julia Child Award, the 2015 TIME 100 "Most Influential People" list, the 2012 Aspen Institute Preston Robert Tisch Award in Civic Leadership, the 2011 NYU Lewis Rudin Award for Exemplary Service to New York City, and the 2000 IFMA Gold Plate Award. Together, Danny and USHG's restaurants and individuals have won an unprecedented 28 James Beard Awards, including Outstanding Restaurateur (2005) and Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America (1996).

Danny and his wife, Audrey, live in New York City and have four children.



Select Keynotes

- **Innovation and Leadership**

Central to Danny's business philosophy is the question: "Whoever wrote the rule?" Union Square Hospitality Group's innovative spirit has taken the company to new frontiers that transcend the restaurant industry. Danny shares stories from his entrepreneurial roots and case studies from throughout his career (including Hospitality Included, a recent initiative to eliminate tipping) to illuminate the power of risk-taking and the value of a mistake well handled.

- **Setting The Table - Danny's Landmark Book**

The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business

In this landmark book, Danny Meyer shares the lessons he's learned in his years in the restaurant business. From the opening night at Union Square Cafe to the evolution of Shake Shack, and everything in between, Danny writes with good humor about the wonderful successes and humbling mistakes he's experienced along the way.

Full of behind-the-scenes history on the creation of Danny's most famous restaurants and the anecdotes, advice, and lessons he has accumulated throughout his life and career, Setting the Table is a treasure trove of insights that are applicable to any business or organization.

- **The Convergence of Casual and Fine**

In this keynote, Danny outlines how his unique employee-first, enlightened hospitality business model is applicable for leaders across all industries.

- **The Power of Hospitality**

In this keynote, Danny Meyer discusses how he positioned himself for success in the culinary world. His insight proves to be very useful for all.

Select Book Titles

- **2008:** Setting the Table: The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business

Select Articles

- [Danny Meyer To Banish Tipping And Raise Prices At His N.Y. Restaurants](#)
- [Danny Meyer on tipping: It's a broken system](#)
- [Shake Shack's Danny Meyer: 'I Was Completely Convinced I Was an Imposter'](#)
- [A Movable Feast: Danny Meyer on a Roll](#)