MICHEL WICHMAN

For editors, producers and podcast hosts

PRESS KIT

THE LONG WAY IS THE SHORTCUT

Why the Work You Want to Skip Builds the Self-Discipline and Character You Need for Lasting Success



HE TURNED DOWN A STAR. THEN HE BECAME NO. 1.

NO. 1 — **Three-star winter hotel in Switzerland** · Karl Wild Hotel Rating for the SonntagsZeitung, year after year

9.0 — **Superb, rated by guests** · Booking.com, 174 guest reviews, November 2026

3, NOT 4 — **Stars, by choice** · Offered a four-star superior rating, he chose three-star superior

INSIDE

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PRESS RELEASE · PUBLICATION DATE DECEMBER 8, 2026

FIRED IN PUBLIC, THEN RANKED NO. 1

A former dishwasher who became one of Switzerland's youngest five-star general managers argues that the work we want to skip is what builds lasting success.

SAANEN-GSTAAD, Switzerland — Everyone wants the shortcut. But in *The Long Way Is the Shortcut* (SwissGlobe Group, December 8, 2026), hotelier Michel Wichman makes the case for the stairs: "An elevator may take you up quickly, but it brings you back down just as fast."

Wichman delivered newspapers at thirteen and started in hospitality washing dishes, often doing alone a job that usually took five people. At thirty-two, he became one of the youngest general managers of a five-star hotel in Switzerland, the Grand Hotel Bellevue in Gstaad. After eight years at the Bellevue he was fired, and his name was in every newspaper. At forty-one, he began building his own hotel. When it was offered a four-star superior rating, he chose three stars. The Spitzhorn in Saanen has since been ranked Switzerland's No. 1 three-star winter hotel in Karl Wild's annual hotel rating for more than ten years, and its guests rate it 9.0 out of 10 on Booking.com.

The book distills that climb into 48 short lessons in nine parts, from setting a clear goal to setbacks, service, mentors, values, discipline, crisis, balance and quality. Every chapter ends with a practical guide. Wichman also takes on a subject close to American readers: the decline of service culture in the United States, where, he writes, "the willingness to provide guests with true added value has clearly given way to modern entitlement."

Readers get free companion tools at bonus.thelongwayistheshortcut.com, including the Staircase Check, a nine-stage self-assessment, and the Spitzhorn Service Playbook with the standards of Wichman's hotel.

NO. 1
Three-star winter hotel in Switzerland

9.0
Superb, rated by guests

3, NOT 4
Stars, by choice

LISTED
In the MICHELIN Guide

The book
The Long Way Is the Shortcut · Michel Wichman · SwissGlobe Group AG · Paperback, 6 × 9 in, 244 pages · ISBN 978-3-9526692-0-4 · also as an e-book · December 8, 2026, at Amazon and in bookstores

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WHY MICHEL

HE TURNED DOWN A STAR. THEN HE BECAME NO. 1.

The title of the book is a paradox, and so is Michel's career. That is what makes him worth an interview: he has the numbers, the scars and the stories, and he tells them straight. In his own words: "As a Dutchman, I'm very direct."

OFFERED FOUR STARS, HE CHOSE THREE.

And built Switzerland's No. 1 three-star winter hotel.

FIRED, WITH HIS NAME ON THE FRONT PAGE.

A few years later, he opened his own hotel.

A THREE-STAR HOTEL.

Guests who stay at five-star hotels fly in by private jet for it.

HE STARTED AT THE SINK.

At thirty-two, he ran a five-star hotel.

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LISTED

In the MICHELIN Guide

Hotel Spitzhorn, Saanen-Gstaad

IN THE PRESS AND THE GUIDES SONNTAGSZEITUNG MONEYCAB GSTAADLIFE ART OF SNOW BARNEWS.CH MICHELIN GUIDE

The long way is the shortcut. Michel doesn't preach the paradox in his title. He has lived it, in public, including the step down.

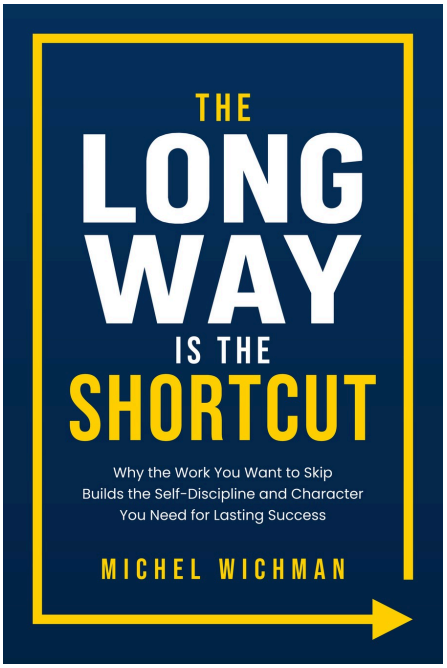
THE BOOK

THERE IS NO ELEVATOR TO THE TOP.

Everyone wants the shortcut. But what goes up at the push of a button comes down just as fast. Success that lasts is built one step at a time. In 48 short lessons, each ending with a practical guide, Michel Wichman shares the principles that took him from washing dishes to the top of his profession, and kept him there.

NINE STAGES, FROM SAANEN TO THE SPITZHORN

1	Find Out What You Really Want	ch. 1–5
2	Forget the Elevator—Take the Stairs	ch. 6–10
3	The Spirit of Service	ch. 11–16
4	Listen to the Right People	ch. 17–22
5	Nothing Works Without Values	ch. 23–29
6	Get to Work	ch. 30–36
7	Stay Strong Through Hard Times	ch. 37–39
8	Savor Your Success and Find Inner Peace	ch. 40–43
9	Cultivate Quality and Authenticity in Your Life	ch. 44–48



WITH THIS BOOK, READERS WILL

- → Turn what you really want into a clear plan
- → Use setbacks and criticism as fuel for growth
- → Build the discipline no shortcut can give you
- → Earn lasting trust through honesty and service

Paperback, 6 × 9 in, 244 pages · ISBN 978-3-9526692-0-4 · SwissGlobe Group AG · December 8, 2026 · e-book available · Free bonus material: bonus.thelongwayistheshortcut.com

THE AUTHOR

MICHEL WICHMAN

Michel Wichman is a hotelier of Dutch origin who leases and runs the renowned three-star superior Spitzhorn vacation hotel in Saanen-Gstaad, in Switzerland's Bernese Oberland, through his company, Wichman Horeca AG.

After training in hotel management and business administration, he worked in the Netherlands and Switzerland, including as maître d'hôtel at Le Grand Chalet and as general manager of the Grand Hotel Bellevue in Gstaad. He has overseen three major hotel projects, among them the renovation and expansion of the Bellevue and the Mansard, which he co-owned. The Spitzhorn, which he planned and built from the ground up, is considered one of the best vacation hotels in its category in Switzerland.

As cofounder and former president of the Top 3 Star Hotels of Switzerland association, he has advocated for the highest quality standards in the mid-range segment for years. He has served on the Saanen Education Commission. He loves classical music, cooking, chess and books on psychology, drives a Porsche 911, rides a road bike, skis, and spends his free time in Provence. He holds Dutch and Swiss citizenship.



FROM THE STAIRCASE IN CHAPTER 1

13	Paperboy
	Dishwasher
	Hotel school
	Ravensdonck, Eindhoven
	Maître d'hôtel
	Le Grand Chalet, Gstaad
31	Assistant manager, Bellevue
32	General manager, Grand Hotel Bellevue
	Fired
	Prime Tower, Zurich
41	Builds the Spitzhorn
	The Mansard, Gstaad
	Top 3 Star Hotels of Switzerland

SHORT BIO, 50 WORDS

Michel Wichman started out washing dishes. At thirty-two he ran a five-star hotel in Gstaad; then he was fired. He went on to build his own hotel, the Spitzhorn in Saanen, ranked Switzerland's top three-star winter hotel for more than ten years. He is the author of *The Long Way Is the Shortcut*.

BEYOND THE BOOK

HOTELIER, BUILDER, EMPLOYER

The book is one chapter. For more than thirty years Michel has been running, building and rethinking hotels, most of them in one of the most demanding places in the world for hospitality: Gstaad. That gives journalists and producers stories well beyond self-improvement: travel, business, hospitality, real estate and leadership.

SINCE 2013

HOTEL SPITZHORN, SAANEN

Planned and built from the ground up, run with his wife Ilse. 50 rooms, three-star superior by choice, ranked No. 1 in its category year after year. Several of his senior team have been there since opening day.

2021 TO 2025

THE MANSARD, GSTAAD

Conceived the boutique hotel on Gstaad's promenade as local partner and co-owner: 29 rooms and the village's only rooftop bar. Opened in May 2024.

COFOUNDER

TOP 3 STAR HOTELS OF SWITZERLAND

Co-initiated and later presided over the association of more than 25 independent three-star hotels that hold themselves to four- and five-star standards.

GENERAL MANAGER AT 32

GRAND HOTEL BELLEVUE, GSTAAD

One of the youngest general managers of a Swiss five-star hotel. Eight years at the Bellevue, including its renovation and expansion.

HE ALSO TALKS ABOUT

- Guest reviews as the new stars
- Understatement as a strategy
- Building hotels for the next generation
- Teams that stay for a decade
- Dutch directness in Swiss luxury
- Running a business as a couple
- Hospitality in Gstaad, from farmers to billionaires

50
rooms at the Spitzhorn, planned and built by Michel from the ground up

2013
the Spitzhorn opens in Saanen; No. 1 in its category ever since

25+
independent hotels in the Top 3 Star Hotels of Switzerland

IN THE PRESS, IN HIS OWN WORDS

WHAT HAS BEEN SAID

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LISTED
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Hotel Spitzhorn, Saanen-Gstaad

MICHEL, QUOTED

"Stars belong in the sky. They have less and less to do with hospitality."

Michel Wichman in **Moneycab interview, 2014** · translated from German

"Stars are one of many quality labels, but they say nothing about the soul of a hotel."

Michel Wichman in **GstaadLife, 2024**

"Let's build new hotels for every generation, and build them before we look old."

Michel Wichman in **Moneycab, 2022** · translated from German

"We're all human. People!"

Michel Wichman in **Art of Snow magazine, 2020**

COVERAGE AND RATINGS

BARNEWS.CH, 2020 TO 2023

Karl Wild Hotel Rating, SonntagsZeitung

The Spitzhorn, Saanen-Gstaad, ranked No. 1 among the three-star winter hotels, as in the previous years.

www.barnews.ch/en/economy/die-besten-winterhotels/12259/

ART OF SNOW, 2020

"Three-star hotel in the sky"

A profile of the Spitzhorn and its host: a three-star superior hotel in five-star surroundings.

issuu.com/greenmobility/docs/artofsnow_2020/s/10124717

MONEYCAB, 2014

Interview with Michel and Ilse Wichman

On the Bellevue, the step into ownership, and why they turned down a fourth star.

www.moneycab.com/interviews/michel-wichman-gastgeber-hotel-spitzhorn-saanen/

GSTAADLIFE, 2024

"Charming: The Mansard Gstaad"

The boutique hotel Michel conceived and co-owned opens on Gstaad's promenade.

www.gstaadlife.com/charming-the-mansard-gstaad

Quotes from German-language sources are translated. Guest rating as shown on Booking.com in November 2026. Ranking: Karl Wild Hotel Rating of the best winter hotels, published in the SonntagsZeitung; three-star category.

FACTS AND FIGURES, WITH PAGE REFERENCES

THE CLIMB IN NUMBERS

13

his age when he took his first job, a paper route. He was a year too young and insisted anyway.

Book page 16

5

people usually needed for the dishwashing job he often handled alone.

Book page 17

32

his age when he became general manager of the five-star Grand Hotel Bellevue in Gstaad, one of the youngest in Switzerland.

Book page 19

8

years he ran the Bellevue, constantly at odds with the board, until he was fired.

Book page 19

41

his age when he began developing the Spitzhorn in Saanen, planning everything himself for two years.

Book page 21

10+

years the Spitzhorn has been ranked Switzerland's No. 1 three-star winter hotel in Karl Wild's annual hotel rating.

Book page 194

25+

hotels in the Top 3 Star Hotels of Switzerland group he cofounded with Sandro Bernasconi.

Book page 21

13

years many Spitzhorn employees have been on the team, committed from the very beginning.

Book page 75

72

hours: his rule for action. Anything you don't do within that time, you will most likely never do.

Book page 158

1,014 → 2,807 M The book is structured as a climb from the village of Saanen to the top of the Spitzhorn, the mountain the hotel is named after: nine stages, one for each part.

STORY ANGLES FOR US MEDIA

NINE STORIES MICHEL CAN TELL

Michel speaks from practice, not theory: as a dishwasher, a maître d'hôtel, a general manager, a hotel builder and an employer. And he is direct. As he says himself: "As a Dutchman, I'm very direct."

WHAT HAPPENED TO AMERICAN SERVICE?

A Swiss hotelier on tipping, entitlement and why the spirit of service can come back. Chapter 11 starts with the United States.

BUSINESS, CULTURE, HOSPITALITY

FIRED IN PUBLIC, AND BETTER FOR IT

Name in every newspaper, a failed lease, then his own hotel at 41. What a public setback teaches about resilience.

CAREERS, RESILIENCE, PODCASTS

THE 72-HOUR RULE

Anything you don't do within seventy-two hours, you will most likely never do. Discipline as a daily practice, from a paperboy who was never late.

PRODUCTIVITY, SELF-IMPROVEMENT

WHY A THREE-STAR HOTEL CAN BEAT FIVE STARS

Exceeding expectations, recognition as the missing need, and what leaders can learn from a small hotel in the Alps.

LEADERSHIP, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

START ON THE BOTTOM STEP

From dishwasher to owner: why the work we want to skip builds the character success needs. Written for his son's generation.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS, EDUCATION

A FISH ROTS FROM THE HEAD DOWN

Hosts who sit in the office, teams without direction, and how leaders set standards by example.

MANAGEMENT, HR, TEAM CULTURE

THE HOTELIER WHO TURNED DOWN A STAR

Offered a four-star superior rating, he chose three stars, then built the No. 1 three-star winter hotel in Switzerland. Understatement as a strategy.

BUSINESS, STRATEGY, TRAVEL

YOUR GUESTS AWARD YOUR STARS

Why guest reviews have replaced inspectors, and what a hotel rated "Superb" by its guests does every day that any business can copy.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, MARKETING

BUILD BEFORE YOU LOOK OLD

From planning the Spitzhorn himself to conceiving The Mansard on Gstaad's promenade: how to build, renew and invest for the next generation.

TRAVEL TRADE, REAL ESTATE, FAMILY BUSINESS

THE AMERICAN ANGLE · CHAPTER 11, PAGE 66

"In the United States, service was considered a true mark of quality for many decades."

Wichman argues that over the past twenty years this culture has shifted, from genuine care to going through the motions, and that the spirit of service can return when people serve because they want to, not because they have to.

FOR THE INTERVIEW

QUESTIONS AND QUOTES

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

1. You started as a dishwasher. What did washing dishes teach you that hotel school couldn't?
2. After eight years at the top, you were fired, with your name in every newspaper. What did you do in the first week?
3. Why build a three-star hotel in a region known for four- and five-star luxury?
4. You write that service culture in the United States has shifted. What changed, and can it come back?
5. What is the seventy-two-hour rule, and how do you use it?
6. Why do so many people see serving as a weakness?
7. How do you decide whether someone is right for your team?
8. Your book is written for your son's generation. What do you want young people to hear?
9. If a reader takes only one step after the book, which should it be?
10. You were offered a four-star superior rating and chose three stars. Why?
11. Who awards the stars today: inspectors or guests?

QUOTABLE, FROM THE BOOK

"An elevator may take you up quickly, but it brings you back down just as fast."
Dedication

"We don't have guests—we just have friends who come back home."
p. 76

"We aren't just selling beer and meat. We're selling emotions!"
p. 71

"Only those with a goal will ever truly arrive."
p. 27

"The stairs aren't there to slow you down. They're there to help you grow."
Back cover

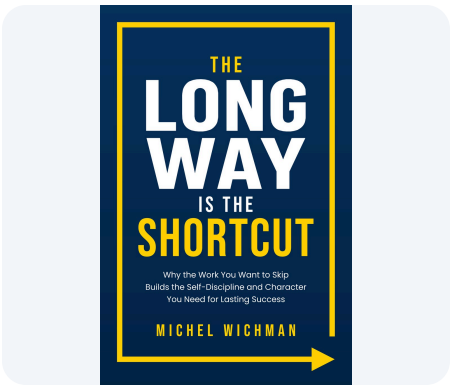
IMAGES, REVIEW COPY AND CONTACT

EVERYTHING YOU NEED



Portrait, color

Michel-Wichman-Portrait-Color.jpg



Book cover, front

Cover-The-Long-Way-Is-the-Shortcut.jpg



Bonus material, mockup

Mockup-Bonus-Material-The-Long-Way-Is-the-Shortcut.jpg

High-resolution images, a black-and-white portrait, the bonus material mockup and a free reading sample with the introduction and the first two chapters are on the press page. Photos are free for editorial use in coverage of the book and its author. Credit: courtesy of Michel Wichman.

FREE READING SAMPLE

Introduction and chapters 1 and 2, watermarked, free to share unchanged. Download it at michelwichman.com/press, no sign-up needed.

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INTERVIEWS

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