

Constrained by the financial crisis, the businesspeople crossing Bucharest are targeting 3 star hotels. The expectations in terms of services' quality remain high even if the amounts available for accommodation have shrunk. The customers are looking for low rack rates hotels and services as close as possible to the 4 and 5 star hotels' services. The ideal quality – price ratio could be the key to success for 3 star hotels during the crisis, Cristina Solomon, executive manager of three star Tempo Hotel tells Bucharest Herald.

BH: When did Tempo Hotel open and how many rooms does it have?

Cristina Solomon: The hotel opened in September 2004 and it has 32 rooms. We do not have a restaurant, but we have a bar and an area arranged for serving breakfast. As most of our customers are businesspeople, the presence of a restaurant is not compulsory as the customers usually have lunch at the conferences or seminars they attend. We can recommend them though, depending on the budget, some restaurants in the area for dinner.

BH: What are the rack rates for one night? Did you have to cut these rates to fight the new conditions imposed by the financial crisis?

Cristina Solomon: The displayed tariffs range between 120 and 160 Euro per night and they include all the taxes. We did cut the rack rates by 10 to 15 per cent, because we had to adjust to our customers' needs. We have many faithful clients, who come here for 3-4 years and recommend us to other people as well and we launched some promotions for their needs.

BH: What is the occupancy rate during the week?

Cristina Solomon:□ The occupancy rate can reach 90 to 95 per cent during the week in high season. In low season it drops to 70- 80 per cent, but it will go up again in March when the first tourism fairs take place and the accommodation demand is very high.

BH: What strategies are you using to attract the customers during this crisis period?

Cristina Solomon: This is a small hotel, without loans and debts and we can afford to cut the tariffs without sacrificing services' quality. We have several promotions in January: the customers pay only two of three nights of accommodation, or in February we offered a free transport to the airport for two nights spent in our hotel. These are not new strategies because we have used them from the beginning. I hope we will manage to maintain at the same level by keeping the services' quality.

BH: What will happen with 3 star hotels during the crisis?

Cristina Solomon:□ I think that 3 star hotels that will offer quality services will only benefit from this crisis, because everybody is trying to reduce their expenses and the migration from 4 and 5 star hotels to 3 star hotels is natural. There is an exclusive customers' segment which will not

give up on 5 star hotels, but middle management customers, who used to check in 4 or 5 star hotels will definitely migrate to the 3 star hotels. We have customers who come back to our hotel, after staying in 4 and 5 star hotels, because, as the hotel is small, the staff offers them personalized treatment. We know them all by names. We have also introduced a special check in system and customers who have stayed in our hotel before, no longer have to fill in any check in papers, just sign. We have gained a lot through breakfast services as well, because we know exactly what each customer eats and how he or she drinks his or her coffee.

BH: What do you think about the initiative of the Tourism Minister Elena Udrea to turn Bucharest into a wellness destination?

Cristina Solomon: I do not know how successful it will be, but all that is done to bring Bucharest on tourism destinations' map, whether it is successful or not, is a promotion effort that must be appreciated. Romania could be a cheap tourism destination and this could attract many foreign tourists here. The important thing is to have low tariffs or services at the level of the tariffs, because we have a big problem here. We also have management and staff issues. Bucharest could become a leisure tourism destination. Unlike most of the European capitals we do not have buses that can offer a tour of the capital. There are not many tourism objectives here, but if the city is well promoted 3 days trips can be organized.

Criza financiar ar putea impulsiona veniturile hotelurilor de 3 stele

Constransi de criza financiara, oamenii de afaceri in tranzit prin Bucuresti se orienteaza catre hoteluri de 3 stele. Asteptarile in ceea ce priveste calitatea serviciilor raman mari, chiar daca sumele disponibile s-au micorat. Clientii cauta hoteluri cu tarife mici si servicii cat mai apropiate de cele ale hotelurilor de 4 si 5 stele. Raportul ideal dintre calitate si pret poate fi reteta succesului pentru hotelurile de 3 stele pe perioada crizei, a declarat intr-un interviu pentru Bucharest Herald, Cristina Solomon, manager Hotel Tempo.

BH: Cand a fost deschis Hotelul Tempo si cate camere are?

Cristina Solomon: Hotelul a fost deschis in septembrie 2004 si are 32 de camere. Nu avem restaurant, dar avem un bar si un spatiu special amenajat pentru servirea micului dejun. Pentru ca suntem un hotel cu clientela de business in special, prezenta unui restaurant nu este obligatorie, intrucat la masa de pranz majoritatea clientilor sunt plecati din hotel, la diverse conferinte, seminarii, cursuri. Le putem recomanda insa, in functie de buget, restaurante din zona pentru cina.

BH: Care sunt tarifele pentru o noapte de cazare? A fost nevoie sa reduceti aceste tarife pentru

a face fata conditiilor impuse de criza financiara?

Cristina Solomon: Tarifele afisate sunt intre 120 si 160 de Euro pe noapte pentru ca includ toate taxele. Intr-adevar, am scazut aceste tarife cu 10-15 la suta pentru ca a fost nevoie sa ne adaptam la nevoile clientilor nostri. Avem foarte multi clienti fideli, care vin aici de 3-4 ani, care ne-au recomandat si altor persoane si in functie de nevoile lor am venit cu anumite promotii.

BH: Care este gradul de ocupare in cursul saptamanii?

Cristina Solomon: Gradul de ocupare poate sa atinga 90- 95 la suta in cursul saptamanii, in sezon. In afara sezonului scade la 70- 80 la suta, dar va creste in martie cand incep primele targuri de turism. In perioada targurilor cererea este foarte mare.

BH: Ce strategii aveti pentru a atrage clientii in aceasta perioada de criza?

Cristina Solomon: Este un hotel mic, fara credite si datorii si atunci ne permitem sa scadem tarifele, fara a sacrifica din calitatea serviciilor. Am avut anumite promotii in ianuarie: pentru trei nopti clientii plateau numai una sau in februarie pentru doua nopti am oferit un transport gratuit la aeroport. Nu sunt strategii noi, pentru ca le-am folosit inca de la inceput. Sper ca vom reusi sa ne mentinem la acelasi nivel prin pastrarea calitatii serviciilor.

BH: Ce se va intampla cu hotelurile de 3 stele pe parcursul crizei financiare?

Cristina Solomon: Eu consider ca hotelurile de 3 stele care vor oferi servicii bune au numai de castigat din aceasta criza, pentru ca toata lumea incearca sa isi reduca cheltuielile si este normal sa existe o migratie de la hotelurile de 4 si 5 stele catre hotelurile de 3 stele. Exista un segment exclusivist care nu va renunta la hotelurile de 5 stele, dar clientii din middle management, care se cazau la hoteluri de 4 sau 5 stele, vor migra catre 3 stele categoric. Si fiind obisnuiti cu anumite conditii, vor cauta hoteluri cu servicii cat mai apropiate de acestea. Avem clienti care revin la noi, dupa ce au stat la hoteluri de 4 si 5 stele pentru ca, fiind un hotel mic, personalul le ofera tratament personalizat. Li cunoastem pe toti. Am introdus si un sistem de check in prin care clientii, care au mai fost cazati la noi nu mai trebuie sa completeze fisa, ci o semeneaza doar. Am castigat foarte mult si prin serviciile de la micul dejun, pentru ca stim exact cum isi bea cafeaua si ce mananca fiecare client la micul dejun.

BH: Cum vi se pare initiativa Ministrului Turismului Elena Udrea de a transforma Bucurestiul intr-o destinatie de wellness?

Cristina Solomon: Nu stiu cat success va avea, in schimb tot ce se face pentru a aduce Bucurestiul pe harta destinatiilor turistice, indiferent ca are succes sau nu este un efort de promovare de apreciat. Romania poate fi o destinatie ieftina din punct de vedere al turismului si atunci strainii pot incepe sa vina. Ideea este sa avem tarife mici sau servicii la nivelul tarifelor, chiar daca sunt mari, pentru ca aici suntem deficitari. Este si o problema de management si de personal. Bucurestiul poate deveni un oras turistic. Spre deosebire de majoritatea capitalelor europene noi nu avem autobuze care sa ofere turul capitalei. Nu sunt foarte multe obiective turistice in Bucuresti, dar daca orasul este promovat asa cum trebuie, se pot organiza sejururi

Financial crisis could boost 3 star hotels' revenues

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turistice de 3 zile.