

***Hospitality market will not witness a dramatic improvement this year, against 2009, but the first positive results have started to reflect in the occupancy rates, in the first quarter of 2010. Customers are still price sensitive and are looking especially at last minute offers, which can help them reduce travel expenses. Rack rates are still low compared to 2008, when the signs of the crisis were still difficult to foresee, but the beginning of the business sectors recovery has also increased the number of business travels to Bucharest and has boosted the occupancy rates in four and five star hotels.***

Five star JW Marriott Bucharest Grand Hotel ( [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com) ) saw a 4 % occupancy increase in the first quarter of 2010, against the first quarter of 2009, Igael Porecki, General Manager of JW Marriott Bucharest Grand Hotel told Bucharest Herald.

“International business is picking up and we also have noticed a slight increase, of 4%, in the occupancy rate, compared to first trimester of 2009. I assume the business activity will not return to the 2008 level this year, but it will probably look better and better, especially for hotels and businesses that depend more on international budgets.” says Igael Porecki.

### **Last minute booking attraction**

Last year, besides looking for low prices, many customers, aware of the low occupancy rates in the hotels, stopped making reservations many days in advance and took advantage of the last minute offers, more attractive in terms of prices. This happened frequently in the conference and events segment, many companies choosing in the last minute the location of an event planned and announced a long time in advance. This year also the dominant feature of the hospitality market, which is not expected to see a spectacular growth, will remain the last minute reservation decisions according to the general manager of JW Marriott Bucharest Grand Hotel told Bucharest Herald.

“Considering the impact of the economic downturn at European and international level, we do not expect the local hotel market to improve dramatically in 2010. It will still remain a market driven by very price sensitive customers, with a “last minute” dominant in terms of reservations and decision making processes.” argues Igael Porecki.

“We have also noticed that clients that organize events and conferences in hotels leave the decision for the last minute, but this is an understandable behavior in the restricted budget situation. Also, many of them turn to professional agencies (PR, event organizers etc) to handle the set up and negotiation of their events.” adds Igael Porecki.

### **Time for renovation**

## Local hotel market will not improve dramatically in 2010, “last minute” reservations will remain dominant

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But the decline of the occupancy rates during the crisis, although it affected the revenues of the hotels, had some positive effects as well. Some hotels used this less hectic period to make renovation works and prepare with a fresh look and better services for the recovery of the market. JW Marriott Hotel poured 1.2 million Euro in the renovation of the Grand Ballroom and the redesign of Vienna Lounge at the first floor.

The number of Vienna Lounge couches increased to 106 and Romanian classic cakes were added to the menu. The equipment in the conference room was also updated with 7 independent video projectors and screens, embedded in the walls, a state-of-the-art centralized audio system, Ipod controlled, 50 intelligent lights with infrared commands, new wallpaper and carpeting.

“Also Vienna Lounge is now a more comfortable place, with more couches than before, rising up the total seat count to 106. The Viennese menu was completed with the Romanian classics Carpati and Savarina, best enjoyed over a cup of the house coffee. And the entire take away options (cakes, pralines, Sacher Torte, even coffee) complete the services brought to our guests.” says Igael Porecki.

The general manager of JW Marriott says the main reason why the investments in Vienna Lounge and Grand Ballroom were made, was the need to offer the customers better, supplementary services, which could make them return to the hotel, instead of cutting the rates further, which would affect the profitability of the business.

“It is not about reducing rates, it is more about value added for the customers. As a hotel, we need to come with something new all the time, create value for our customers, reasons to come back and always discover something new. As a matter of fact, this is what we did when we decided to renovate our Grand Ballroom and redesign our Vienna Lounge.” explains Igael Porecki.

### **Courtyard suitable for expansion**

By 2012 the Marriott chain will be present in Bucharest with a Courtyard hotel as well, located in Unirii area. The hotel will include 198 rooms and Igael Porecki says the project is now in the construction approval stage.

“The new Courtyard project is still in the precursory phase, including the legal, administrative, construction approvals. I am not aware of any difficulties, but there are a lot of legal steps to be taken before undergoing such an important project.”

The manager talks about expansion possibilities of the chain in other cities of Romania, with the Courtyard brand, “a better suited brand for the local market, mostly oriented towards business travel. But nothing is ever excluded and serious proposals are taken into consideration.”

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**Igael Porecki: Piata hoteliera locala nu se va imbunatati semnificativ in 2010, rezervarile "last minute" vor domina in continuare**

*Piata hoteliera nu va inregistra o imbunatatire semnificativa anul acesta, comparativ cu 2009, dar primele rezultate pozitive au inceput sa se reflecte in gradul de ocupare, in primul sfert al lui 2010. Clientii raman in continuare sensibili la pret si se orienteaza in special spre oferte last minute, care ii pot ajuta sa reduca din cheltuielile de calatorie. Tarifele de cazare sunt inca joase comparativ cu 2008, cand semnele crizei erau inca greu de prevazut, dar debutul recuperarii sectoarelor de business a crescut si numarul de calatorii de afaceri in Bucuresti si a impulsionat ratele de ocupare in hotelurile de patru si cinci stele.*

Hotelul de cinci stele JW Marriott Bucharest Grand Hotel ( [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com) ) a inregistrat o crestere de 4% a ratei de ocupare in primul sfert al lui 2010, fata de primul sfert al lui 2009, a declarat pentru Bucharest Herald, Igael Porecki, manager general JW Marriott Bucharest Grand.

"Afacerile internationale isi revin si am observat si o crestere mica, de 4%, a gradului de ocupare, comparativ cu primul trimestru al lui 2009. Activitatea in domeniul afacerilor nu se va intoarce probabil la nivelul din 2008, anul acesta, dar va arata probabil din ce in ce mai bine, in special pentru hoteluri si alte tipuri de afaceri care depind mai mult de bugete internationale." spune Igael Porecki.

### **Atractia rezervarilor "last minute"**

Anul trecut, pe langa tarife mici, multi clienti, constienti de gradul mic de ocupare din hoteluri, au incetat sa mai faca rezervari cu multe zile in avans, in favoarea ofertelor last minute, mai atractive din punct de vedere al preturilor. Acest lucru s-a intamplat frecvent in cazul segmentului de conferinte si evenimente, multe companii alegand in ultimul moment locatia unui eveniment planificat si anuntat cu mult timp inainte. Anul acesta trasatura dominanta a pietei hoteliere, care nu va avea o crestere spectaculoasa, va ramane rezervarea "last minute." a declarat pentru Bucharest Herald, directorul general al JW Marriott Bucharest Grand Hotel.

"Avand in vedere impactul crizei economice la nivel european si international, nu ne asteptam

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la o imbunatatire semnificativa a pietei hoteliere in 2010. Va ramane in continuare o piata condusa de clienti foarte sensibili la pret cu dominanta "last minute" in ceea ce priveste rezervarile si deciziile." explica Igael Porecki.

"Am observat si faptul ca cei care organizeaza evenimente si conferinte amana deciziile pana in ultimul moment, dar este un comportament de inteles, intr-o perioada in care bugetul este restrans. Multi clienti apeleaza la agentii specializate (PR, organizari de evenimente etc) pentru a se ocupa de organizarea si negocierea evenimentelor lor." adauga Igael Porecki.

### Timp pentru renovare

Dar scaderea gradului de ocupare in perioada de criza, desi a afectat veniturile hotelurilor, a avut si cateva efecte pozitive. Unele hoteluri au folosit aceasta perioada mai putin aglomerata pentru a face lucrari de renovare si pentru a se pregati cu o imagine noua si cu servicii mai bune pentru momentul in care piata isi va reveni. JW Marriott Hotel a investit 1,2 milioane de Euro in renovarea salii de conferinte si evenimente Grand Ballroom si in redesign-ul cafenelei Vienna Lounge, de la primul etaj.

Numarul de canapele din Vienna Lounge a crescut la 106, iar in meniu au fost introduse prajituri clasice romanesti. Echipamentele din sala de conferinte au fost de asemenea imbunatatite cu 7 video proiectoare independente cu ecrane, incastrate in pereti, un sistem audio centralizat modern, Ipod controlat, 50 de lumini inteligente cu comanda cu infrarosu, covoare si tapet noi.

"Vienna Lounge este acum un spatiu mult mai confortabil, cu mai multe canapele decat inainte, in total 106. Meniul vienez a fost completat cu prajiturile romanesti clasice Carpati si Savarina, savurate cel mai bine alaturi de o ceasca de cafea. Si variantele de deserturi care pot fi comandate la pachet (prajituri, praline, Sacher Torte, chiar si cafea) completeaza serviciile oferite clientilor nostri." spune Igael Porecki.

Directorul general al JW Marriott spune ca motivul principal pentru care au fost facute investitiile in Vienna Lounge si in Grand Ballroom a fost nevoia de a le oferi clientilor servicii suplimentare, mai bune, care sa ii determine sa se intoarca la hotel, in locul reducerii tarifulor, care ar afecta profitabilitatea afacerii.

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"Nu ne-am concentrat pe reducerea tarifelor, ci pe valoarea adaugata pentru clienti. Ca hotel trebuie sa venim cu ceva nou tot timpul, sa creem valoare pentru clientii nostri, motive sa se intoarca si sa descopere mereu ceva nou. Asta am facut atunci cand am hotarat sa renovam Grand Ballroom si sa redecoram Vienna Lounge." explica Igael Porecki.

### **Courtyard, potrivit pentru expansiune**

Pana in 2012 lantul Marriott va fi prezent in Bucuresti si cu un hotel Courtyard, localizat in zona Unirii. Hotelul va include 198 de camere, iar Igael Porecki spune ca proiectul este in faza in care obtine autorizatiile de constructie.

"Noul hotel Courtyard este inca in faza de debut, care presupune obtinerea aprobarilor legale, administrative si de constructie. Din cate stiu nu au aparut dificultati de niciun fel, dar trebuie facuti multi pasi legali, inainte de a incepe constructia unui astfel de proiect."

Managerul vorbeste despre posibilitatile de expansiune ale lantului si in alte orase din Romania, cu brandul Courtyard, "un brand mai potrivit pentru piata locala, orientata mai mult spre turismul de afaceri. Dar nu este exclus nimic, iar propunerile serioase sunt luate in considerare."