

## Hotel market is starting to recover

Written by Administrator

Monday, 12 October 2009 02:36 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 October 2009 02:40

---

***After a turbulent time for the hotels, during which the occupancy degree fell dramatically on the background of the financial crisis, that determined companies to cut the business trip budgets, the hotel market shows signs of recovery. If the first trimester of the year and the summer months generated low revenues, September, a month that opens the autumn season, came with good signs for the hoteliers and the forecasts for October and November are just as positive, the general manager of Howard Johnson Grand Plaza Hotel, Sonia Nastase stated for Bucharest Herald.***

“September was a very good month for Howard Johnson Grand Plaza Hotel, compared with the rest of the months this year. We feel the same trend for October and November and in December we received enough demands for the the events segment.” says Sonia Nastase

**BH: The hotel industry has yet been strongly affected by the financial crisis, how has Howard Johnson Grand Plaza Hotel felt the effects of this crisis?**

**Sonia Nastase:** The number of arrivals started to slightly drop in September 2008, but none of the hoteliers was expecting such a dramatic fall of the occupancy rate. The low number of arrivals in the first three months of 2009: January, February and March, representing the low season, has added to this fall generated by the financial crisis. The decline of the arrivals was all the more dramatic as 2007 and 2008 were very good years for the Romanian hotel market. Howard Johnson Hotel registered a demand fall of approximately 30 per cent this year, compared to last year.

**BH: What was the hoteliers' reaction to this decline?**

**Sonia Nastase:** Many hoteliers panicked and cut the accommodation rates too low. Their reaction was on one side natural, because they were not prepared for such a fall, difficult to manage, but on the other hand it put pressure on the other hotels that had to reduce the tariffs as well, to be able to fight the competition. The situation was difficult for the 5 star hotels because they cannot cut the rates without reducing at the same time the quality of the services and the profit margins. On their turn the customers speculated this price decline and negotiated even lower rates.

**BH: What was the strategy adopted by Howard Johnson Grand Plaza Hotel to offset the fall of the occupancy degree? □**

**Sonia Nastase:** Our strategy was to include in the accommodation packages, supplementary free of chage services. We offered our customers vouchers for various outlets of the hotel:

## Hotel market is starting to recover

Written by Administrator

Monday, 12 October 2009 02:36 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 October 2009 02:40

---

discounts to massage, restaurants and free access to internet. We adopted a long term strategy, because our purpose was to keep the quality of the services and offer the customers supplementary facilities, to give them at the same rate, more than they were expecting, not less. This strategy required supplementary efforts from our side, but we managed to keep our customers, showing them that we are close to them and we understand them even during times when the business goes bad and the trip budgets must be cut. We will be here in 10 years too and we have customers who return here.

### **BH: Did you have to operate staff cuts?**

**Sonia Nastase:** We had to freeze some jobs. The employees have learnt to help each other in this period, which means increase of the work efficiency and for them, experience development, because the purpose of this time is to find solutions to unusual issues. Those who were working for one restaurant within the hotel took over responsibilities at the other restaurant as well, for instance, and this is what happened with all the employees.

### **BH: What were the results of the Food&Beverage and conference and events segments? Did they manage to balance the losses registered on the accommodation segment? □**

**Sonia Nastase:** The conference and events segment was less affected than the accommodation segment and this was due to the fact that we started to pay attention to some new customers and included among our events the wedding and baptize parties. This is why I can say that this segment had a better evolution than last year on some areas.

*Sonia Nastase was appointed at the head of Howard Johnson Grand Plaza Hotel at the beginning of September, replacing British Peter Craig Martin, who held this position since 2006. "I am strongly emotionally connected to this hotel, because I worked here from the opening." says Sonia Nastase,□ who held the marketing and sales manager position within the five star hotel. Since 2005 to 2009 Sonia Nastase was senior associate at the hotel consultancy firm Trend Hospitality. "I have been working in this industry since 1996, since the international hotel chains opened the first hotels in Bucharest. From 2005 I had the chance to get to know this industry at another level, from the perspective of the hotel owner. It is an area I like a lot, an area difficult to leave after entering, because it offers permanent motivation."*

### **Howard Johnson Grand Plaza 5\***

**5- 7 Calea Dorobantilor, Sector 1, Bucharest**

**285 rooms and suites**

**Grand Plaza Fit Club**

**Restaurants: Benihana (Japanese cuisine), Avalon (fusion), Fusion Brunch**

**9 conference rooms with capacities between 10 and 350 seats**

## Hotel market is starting to recover

Written by Administrator

Monday, 12 October 2009 02:36 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 October 2009 02:40

---

**2008 turnover: 13 million Euro**

**2009 average occupancy rate: 50 per cent**

### **Sonia Nastase: "Piata hoteliera incepe sa isi revina"**

*Dupa o perioada turbulenta pentru hoteluri, in care gradul de ocupare a scazut dramatic pe fondul crizei financiare, care a determinat companiile sa reduca bugetele de calatorii, piata hoteliera da semne de revenire. Daca primul trimestru al anului si lunile de vara au generat venituri scazute, luna septembrie care deschide sezonul de toamna, vine cu semnale bune pentru hotelieri, iar prognozele pentru lunile octombrie si noiembrie sunt la fel de pozitive, a declarat pentru Bucharest Herald Sonia Nastase, general manager Hotel Howard Johnson Grand Plaza.*

"Luna septembrie a fost o luna foarte buna pentru hotelul Howard Johnson Grand Plaza, comparativ cu restul lunilor din acest an. Acelasi trend il simtim si in octombrie si in noiembrie, iar in decembrie am primit destul de multe cereri pe partea de organizare de evenimente." spune Sonia Nastase.

**BH: Totusi industria hoteliera a fost afectat puternic de criza financiara, cum a resimtit Hotelul Howard Johnson Grand Plaza efectele acestei crize?**

**Sonia Nastase:** Numarul de sosiri a inceput sa scada usor din septembrie 2008, inasa niciun hotelier nu se astepta ca va urma o scadere atat de mare a gradului de ocupare. La aceasta scadere, generata de criza financiara, s-a adaugat numarul mic de sosiri din primele trei luni ale anului 2009: ianuarie, februarie si martie, care reprezinta perioada de low season a anului. Scaderea sosirilor a fost cu atat mai dramatica cu cat 2007 si 2008 au fost niste ani foarte buni pentru piata hoteliera din Romania. Hotelul Howard Johnson a inregistrat o scadere de aproximativ 30 la suta a cererii anul acesta, comparativ cu anul trecut.

**BH: Care a fost reactia hotelierilor la aceasta scadere?**

**Sonia Nastase:** Multi hotelieri au intrat in panica si au redus foarte mult tarifele la cazare.

## Hotel market is starting to recover

Written by Administrator

Monday, 12 October 2009 02:36 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 October 2009 02:40

---

Reactia lor a fost pe de o parte fireasca, pentru ca nu erau pregatiti pentru o astfel de scadere, greu de gestionat, in sa pe de alta parte au pus presiune asupra celorlalte hoteluri care au fost nevoite sa scada tarifele, pentru a face fata competitiei. Situatia a fost grea pentru hotelurile de 5 stele pentru ca acestea nu pot scadea tarifele, fara a scadea in acelasi timp calitatea serviciilor si marja de profit. La randul lor clientii au speculat aceasta scadere a preturilor si au negociat tarife si mai mici.

### **BH: Care a fost strategia adoptata de hotelul Howard Johnson Grand Plaza pentru a contracara scaderea gradului de ocupare?**

**Sonia Nastase:** Strategia noastra a fost de a include in pachetele turistice servicii suplimentare in regim de gratuitate. Le-am oferit clientilor vouchere la diverse outlet-uri ale hotelului: discounturi la masaj, la restaurant si internet gratuit. Strategia noastra este pe termen lung, pentru ca ne-am propus sa nu scadem din calitatea serviciilor si sa le oferim clientilor facilitati suplimentare, sa primeasca la acelasi tarif mai mult decat se asteptau, in niciun caz mai putin. Aceasta strategie a insemnat din partea noastra un efort suplimentar, in sa am reusit sa ne mentinem clientii aratandu-le ca suntem alaturi de ei si ii intelegem chiar si in momentele in care afacerile merg mai prost, iar bugetele de calatorii trebuie reduse. Vom fi aici si peste 10 ani si avem o clientela repetitiva.

### **BH: Au fost necesare restructurari de personal?**

**Sonia Nastase:** Gradul redus de ocupare ne-a determinat sa inghetam anumite posturi. Angajatii au invatat in aceasta perioada sa se ajute, sa nu se mai limiteze la sarcinile din fisa postului lor, ceea ce a insemnat eficientizarea muncii si cresterea experientei pentru ei, pentru ca rostul acestei perioade este impulsul de a gasi solutii la probleme iesite din tipare. Cei care lucrau la un singur restaurant din cadrul hotelului au preluat responsabilitati si la alt restaurant spre exemplu si asa s-a intamplat cu toti angajatii.

### **BH: Care au fost rezultatele segmentelor de Food&Beverage si conferinte si evenimente? Au reusit sa compenseze pierderile inregistrate pe segmentul de cazare?**

**Sonia Nastase:** Segmentul de conferinte si evenimente a fost mai putin afectat decat segmentul de cazare si acest lucru s-a datorat si faptului ca am inceput sa acordam atentie unor clienti noi si sa includem printre evenimentele noastre si organizarea de nunti si botezuri. De aceea pot spune ca acest segment a avut o evolutie mai buna chiar decat anul trecut, pe anumite zone.

## Hotel market is starting to recover

Written by Administrator

Monday, 12 October 2009 02:36 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 October 2009 02:40

---

*Sonia Nastase a fost numita la conducerea Howard Johnson Grand Plaza Hotel la inceputul lunii septembrie, inlocuindu-l pe britanicul Peter Craig Martin care a detinut aceasta functie din 2006. "Sunt legata emotional destul de puternic de acest hotel pentru ca am fost aici inca de la deschidere." spune Sonia Nastase, care a ocupat functia de director de marketing si vanzari in cadrul hotelului de cinci stele. Din 2005 pana in 2009 Sonia Nastase a fost senior asociate la firma de consultanta hoteliera Trend Hospitality. "Lucrez in aceasta industrie din 1996, de cand lanturile internationale au deschis primele hoteluri in Bucuresti. Din 2005 am avut sansa sa cunosc aceasta industrie si de la un alt nivel, din perspectiva proprietarului de hotel. Este un domeniu care imi place foarte tare, in care o data ce ai intrat este foarte greu sa mai iesi, pentru ca iti ofera permanenta motivatie."*

### **Howard Johnson Grand Plaza Hotel 5\***

**Calea Dorobantilor Nr 5-7, Sector 1, Bucuresti**

**285 camere si apartamente**

**Grand Plaza Fit Club**

**Restaurante: Benihana (bucatarie japoneza), Avalon (fusion), Fusion Brunch**

**9 Sali de conferinte cu capacitati intre 10 si 350 de locuri**

**Cifra de afaceri 2008: 13 milioane Euro**

**Gradul mediu de ocupare in 2009: 50 la suta**