

Market

According to surveys on the development of the hotel market in 2006, Romania has one of the lowest growth indices in Europe, both in terms of new hotel investments on the market and in terms of average occupancy rates and tariffs, in Bucharest in particular.

Currently, there are at least 58 ongoing hotel projects, which will be finalised in the coming months, and the investments involved are likely to reach 1.1 billion euros. The general opinion on the market is that the current number of hotel rooms is insufficient. In this context, Bucharest looks set to be a particularly intriguing market in the coming years.

The Crowne Plaza Hotel has 165 rooms and suites and ten conference halls. Last year, the company's revenues totaled 10 million euros (Source: Ziarul financiar). Crowne Plaza currently has three main rivals on the Romanian market.

Achievements

Since its opening in 1998, Crowne Plaza has developed its image, always aspiring to be more than just another new hotel on the market. In less than ten years, Crowne Plaza has developed into a truly exceptional experience. In order to deliver its unique product, the hotel offers many specific facilities and services. Some of these are exactly what one would expect of a high quality hotel chain, while others are small, thoughtful touches, intended to make a big difference to guests.

Through such efforts, the hotel has received numerous awards over the years:

- In 1999, Crowne Plaza Hotel received the Best Newcomer Award, for the best hotel to have joined the InterContinental Hotels Group IHG, with an important impact on the development of the brand.
- In 2003, Crowne Plaza received the Torchbearer Award for being in the top percentile in the guest satisfaction survey index and in the top 33rd percentile within the group in terms of overall standard compliance.



- The most recent award came in 2005, the "Quality Excellence" award, given to IHG hotels' top performers within Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA). Though the standards were particularly high, the hotel found itself amongst the cream of the competition.

History

Crowne Plaza is one of the hotel brands belonging to the InterContinental Hotels Group. The origins of the InterContinental Hotels Group can be traced back to 1777, when William Bass established a brewery in Burton-on-Trent, England, trading under his own name. The business thrived under William and his son Michael Thomas, developing into a leading British brewer and exporter. In 1876, their red triangle trademark became the first trademark to be registered in the UK.

Bass already owned a small chain of hotels, acquired in 1987. However, the first significant international move into the hotel industry came in 1988, with the purchase of Holiday Inns International. With continued investment, the brand grew internationally, and other brands were developed to expand the portfolio and build on its strong infrastructure. Crowne Plaza was launched in 1994, to move the group into the upper end of the market. As the business became more brand-focused, the group sold its owned US hotel assets in 1997, whilst retaining the branding through franchise agreements.

The first Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza was opened in Rockville, Maryland, US. In 1994, Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts were established as a separate brand in the US, and in 1999, the brand opened its first European resort in Madeira, Portugal.

In 1996, Ana Hotels S.A. purchased the old and dilapidated

Flora hotel. For one year and four months, the hotel was closed for renovation purposes, with Ana Hotels investing around US\$ 11 million. At the end of 1997, Ana Hotels signed a management contract with Six Continents (former Bass Hotels & Resorts), and the hotel was officially opened in December 1998.



Product

Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts is a dynamic hotel brand, currently found in over 40 countries around the world. Truly international, Crowne Plaza offers premium accommodation, designed for the discerning business and leisure traveler who appreciates simplified elegance combined with the practicality of the latest features. At Crowne Plaza, guests can enjoy a 24-hours business service, wireless high-speed internet access in the lobby, a fitness center and a swimming pool. With 220 hotels, 61,765 rooms and other 44 hotels in the pipeline, Crowne Plaza is an upscale brand that can be found in major gateway cities, offering high levels of comfort, service and amenities.

The hotels are designed with executive business guests in mind. Crowne Plaza prides itself on being "The Place To Meet", a cozy hotel with a pleasant ambiance and a friendly staff, located in a quiet, green, residential area, the perfect place for business travelers, as well as tourists. In recent years, the meeting places, the garden and the hotel terraces have proved ideal locations for a wide range of events.

The management of Crowne Plaza Bucharest believes in the essence of business, that every day should be dedicated to exceeding the expectations of its guests.

Recent Developments

The InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), the world's largest hotel group in terms of the number of rooms, is experiencing record development, with regard to Holiday Inn Hotels & Resorts, Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts and Hotel Indigo brands, as can be seen in the IHG Plc. interim results from June 30th 2006.

Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts continues to expand its portfolio, developing an additional twenty hotels (more than 4,600 rooms). In the



last eighteen months, the brand has grown by 25%, as a result of new hotels opening across the Americas.

In 2005, Crowne Plaza started to offer a comprehensive meetings package to ensure an exceptional meeting experience. Moreover, a new loyalty programme, consisting in offering Priority Club points for meetings held in Crowne Plaza hotels, is designed to motivate meeting planners to choose Crowne Plaza and to increase meetings revenues.

Promotion

The brand's communication strategy is designed so as to reflect how the guests see the hotel. Everything that Crowne Plaza does is based around trying to see its business through the clients' eyes.

The marketing and communication strategy of the group for the coming year is focused on the following areas: system growth, brand differentiation, and service excellence. This means a wide range of activities, all focused on driving brand preference and promoting the key "reasons to choose" Crowne Plaza. Short-term promotions provide increased brand awareness programs, while long-term brand market strategies are

developed to ensure that Crowne Plaza standards lead to the maintaining and improvement of the brand's standing in the marketplace. Based on these guidelines, Crowne Plaza Bucharest decided from the start to craft an image reflecting its position as an important player on the market. The brand's presence in different magazines and business newspapers with news about the hotel (promoting new services and facilities, new people joining the team, events held in the hotel etc); the organisation of events for loyal clients; acting as a partner in

numerous charity projects; through all these channels, the hotel has created the image of being a true "Place To Meet". Thanks to its conference facilities (which can hold events for up to 1,000 people), its terraces and its garden, Crowne Plaza Bucharest became an ideal location for corporate and embassy events, as well as for private functions. Crowne Plaza believes that by taking care of its guests, it is able to benefit from the best kind of promotion available – that spread by word-of-mouth. In recent years, the hotel chose to play a more visible and active role in the life of the community, by supporting a number of different charity programs. Crowne Plaza is the official partner and sponsor of the Unicef Gala (fundraising for children affected by HIV), the Opera Ball and the Halloween Ball (fundraising for Roma children), and has also sponsored many smaller events.

Brand Values

The Crowne Plaza brand aims to live up to the ideals and expectations of its guests. The hotel also wants to differentiate itself from the competition. The hotel's two core brand perceptions, comfort and substance, are fundamental in this aspect. But what do they mean?

Firstly, comfort. This doesn't mean ostentatious luxury or extravagant decor. It means a place where the guests can sink into a comfortable sofa, kick off their shoes and unwind after a hard day's work. It means surroundings which put guests at ease and appeal to their senses. It means thoughtful and attentive service, where



the hotel's members of staff respect and value their guests, anticipate their needs and make sure that everything is just as they expect.

Secondly, substance. Staying at Crowne Plaza is a reassuring experience. The hotel's furnishings are solid and generous, with interiors designed so as to include curved shapes, warm colors and natural materials. Substance also means integrity and fairness. The Crowne Plaza service lives up to its promises. The brand communicates honestly and clearly.

www.bucharest.crowneplaza.com



THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

CROWNE PLAZA

- › The InterContinental Hotels Group is the world's biggest hotel company in terms of number of rooms. The Group has about 534,000 hotel rooms in nearly 100 countries and territories around the world
- › Through the program "Lowest Internet Rate Guaranteed", every hotel reservation booked through the brand's web site is guaranteed to have the lowest rate publicity available on the InterContinental chain worldwide
- › In May 2004, Crowne Plaza introduced the "Sleep Advantage" program, which offers quiet zones in its hotels – separate floors with no housekeeping services before 10am and no children. Crowne Plaza replaced some 50,000 beds and pieces of bedding last year, hired a sleep doctor for advice on relaxation, and created a sleep kit for guests, containing an eye mask, earplugs, night light, drape clip, lavender aromatherapy spray and a sleep-easy CD