

The personal relationship with a customer is the most important factor

Interview with Mr. Michal Nad', Director of Business Development at Grand Hotel River Park, a Luxury Collection & Sheraton Bratislava Hotel

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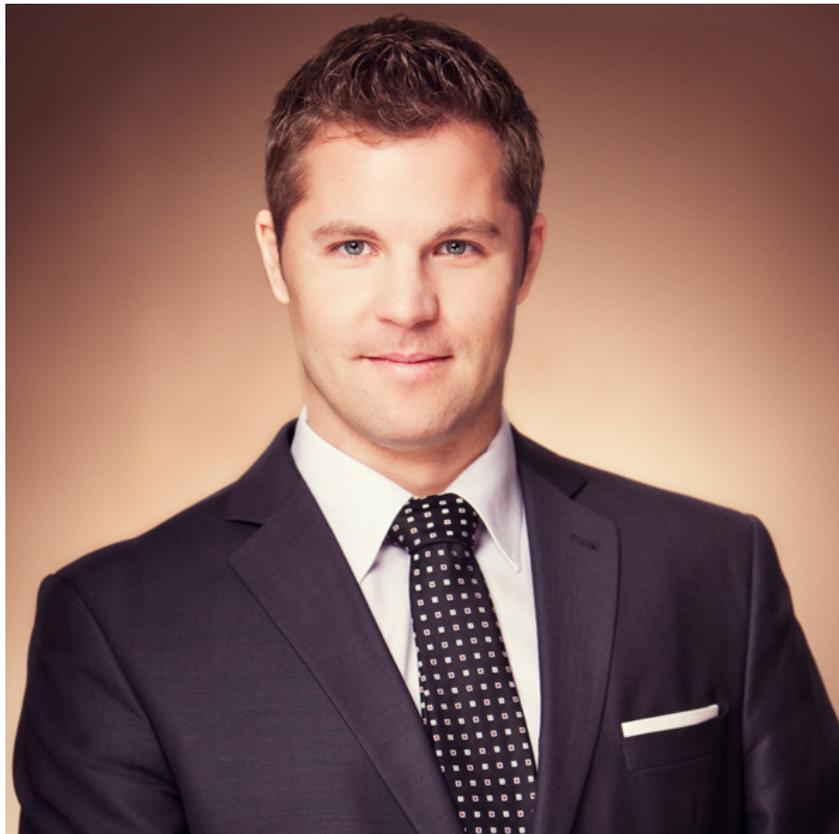


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Q: Some will say business development is sales, other will say it is the partnership and others – it is hustling. In general, we believe, it is making a business better. What is business development in the real world, in your working hours?

In my opinion, BD means any activities, decisions, strategies done in order to create new or develop existing business opportunities. It combines sales, marketing, and revenue management and the result should be a healthy business model with the maximised profitability and sustainability. This is possible only through stable partnerships and full trust in the product and business representatives you do business with.

Q: How do you improve the long-term value for customers and relationships?

Building a close, many times even personal relationship is the most important factor in a successful long-term relationship with a customer. If I become friends with someone, I will not deny his business over a competition that easily. However, this must be a natural process, not business driven but via a personal connection. For this reason, finding a suitable professional with skills of natural interaction with clients is crucial.

Q: In your opinion – what are the strengths and opportunities for Bratislava, or Slovakia, in the global market?

Elementary requirements of a popular destination are great accessibility, safety and delivery or expectations set for that specific destination. I believe that Bratislava meets all of these requirements. On top of that, is not yet fully discovered by various segments of travelers, many times the expectations, which people have before coming to Bratislava, are highly exceeded. Another opportunity of Bratislava the huge infrastructure development, which has been going on. Thanks to that, Bratislava offers the different experience every time a person visits it. To give you an example, both of our hotels and the entire complex of buildings and shopping center, were built from scratch just 6 years ago. And there are many more of such examples. Visitors can explore new districts, parks and other projects which are constantly growing. That of course in addition to the historical part of the city with the strong history.

Q: What is in your opinion the current state of the meetings/business industry sector and growth projection for Slovakia?

Since 2015, we see a constant growth of demand of MICE business in Bratislava, which is the main driver of this business segment in Slovakia, especially on an international market. 2018 is expected to continue in this trend and I am certain that various successful references from the past years are supporting it. We could test our ability to hold various top-level events whether in the governmental, corporate, sport or cultural level. I am confident to say that all of these events have met or exceeded their expectations and help ourselves to push the benchmark continuously higher.

Q: Who are the hotel's main guests and how do you manage to address different types of guests?

We have got a well-balanced split of all main business segments, one third are individual non-contracted travelers (including guests booking via our website or via OTAs), one third are individual corporate travelers and remaining third are groups. Our aim is to increase more group business at the costs of individual corporate business as MICE is the most profitable business for hotels.

Q: Which ones are the unexplored market opportunities, waiting for Bratislava, to reach out and grab them?

I believe that the Middle East and US markets are those, which we should focus most on. They have already strong presence in all major surrounding cities like Prague, Vienna, Budapest and thus all we need is to shift some of their business to Bratislava. I am sure that once this happens, it will move the city again to the next level.

Q: What is your biggest challenge as the Director of Business Development at the Grand Hotel River Park?

Being the only international branded 5* luxury hotel in the city, it is very important for us to keep our position of a market leader in terms of product, services, pricing and setting new trends in all business aspects. That is why we work with best business partners, suppliers and are very strict on keeping the consistency in the before mentioned factors.

Q: What are the Grand Hotel River Park future plans in Bratislava and region?

Our ambition is to contribute to the city's continuous improvement in the overall impression of our travelers. I understand that hotel is just one part of the overall experience, but where we can help is sharing our knowledge of guests' behavior, preferences, feedbacks, and statistics. This area is very well covered by all international hotel chains and it is our responsibility to share the outcome with all main stakeholders of Bratislava tourism community.