

# TRANSLATING THE LOCATION INTO A BENEFIT

## ALENA SPISIAKOVA, DIRECTOR OF SALES AND MARKETING Kempinski Hotels - Grand Hotel Kempinski High Tatras

INTERVIEW BY **NIKA PIRNAR** / PHOTO CREDITS **GH KEMPINSKI HIGH TATRAS**



Alena Spisiakova took over as Director of Sales and Marketing at Kempinski Hotels, Grand Hotel Kempinski High Tatras, in July 2015. Her background is in the marketing, PR and E-commerce sectors and she was formerly part of the team at Tatra Mountain Resorts. Founded in Germany in 1897, Kempinski Hotels has long reflected the finest traditions of European hospitality. Today, as ever, Kempinski is synonymous with distinctive luxury.

### **Q: What does it take to be a meetings star winner?**

Grand Hotel Kempinski High Tatras considers it a great honour to be the meetings star winner. Our everyday task is to exceed our clients' expectations that are naturally growing with every stay and over time. At the same time, we are striving to remain the market leader with an innovative approach. Our beautiful location in the High Tatras national park has destined us for incentives and team-building sessions, but also high-level state visits due to our service and reputation. There is always some more you can do for the clients and event organisers, and we aim to make the life and work of all the event colleagues that little bit more easy, not only by giving them the support with event organisation and the reassurance of quality, but also with straightforward communication and extra benefits to relax while on the property.

### **Q: What are your biggest challenges?**

As a destination High Tatras is still a mystery for international companies. Even Slovakia as a country often gets confused with Slovenia. The biggest challenge therefore remains destination marketing and transport possibilities. On the other hand, there is a demand for new destinations and especially for destinations considered to be "safe". Here our challenge turns into an opportunity and we are already seeing new markets discovering our location. Our task is also to translate the location into a benefit. We are living in a fast-paced world, but to take meetings out of the rush of the city may actually greatly benefit the purpose of the event. Relationships get strengthened when the teams and participants are taken away from their everyday environment and clear their minds in the fresh mountain air.

### **Q: How do you use social media?**

Social media is a powerful tool nowadays, but has to be managed with care. Each channel has to be approached with a different strategy and looked at in terms of how users are consuming it. Through imagery we can broadcast the picturesque surroundings of our hotel and develop a desire to experience its beauty, as such experiences are highly valued, especially by the younger generation. Therefore Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram all have their worth. For example, through LinkedIn you can target professionals more, although the audience is smaller. In Slovakia still not every option for advertising and targeting are available, and we do have some guidelines set from the Kempinski corporate office even for social media, so daily monitoring is the key for interaction with guests.

### **Q: How do you best motivate your staff?**

Our hotel was also awarded the Best Employer in the hospitality industry in Slovakia for the second year in a row. We are very proud to have employees still within our team who started with us when the hotel was opened in 2009. At the same time it is great to see many successful stories where colleagues have moved up and across different departments. This is one of the advantages with our hotel and Kempinski - the learning path. Specialised training is developed by the corporate office and some is designed for the property. Kempinski offers the opportunity to transfer to different hotels in the portfolio, but also to travel at special rates. Internally we like to celebrate our successes and positive feedback from our clients. We organise staff parties and this strengthens the team spirit. We believe in leading by example, straightforward communication, an entrepreneurial approach, being people oriented and creating traditions together.

### **Q: Which other hotels do you admire?**

Great examples of best practice can be found in most hotels. It is important to find and implement the right ones for your property. We like to share success stories within the Kempinski hotels and learn from our colleagues. We do like to look at properties like St. Moritz or Hotel Adlon that share a long history of European luxury and that became legends over time.

