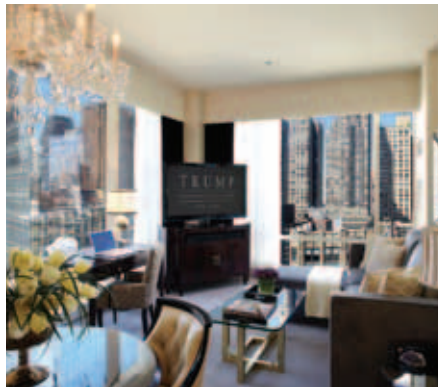
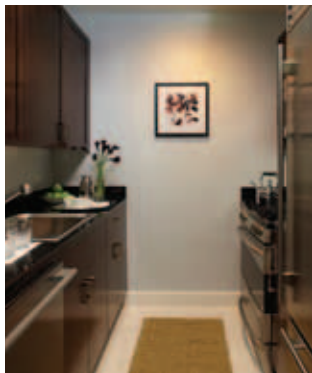


Hospitality's Global Impact

Return on Investment

An Interview with Suzie Mills,
General Manager, Trump International
Hotel & Tower New York



EDITORS' NOTE Suzie Mills has served on the management team of the award-winning Trump International Hotel & Tower® New York since pre-opening in 1996. Mills was promoted to General Manager in 2006, becoming the youngest GM in New York City. Beginning her hospitality career working at her parents' hotel in Wales at the age of 10, she has been honored as one of Crain's New York's prestigious "40 Under 40" and earned her property the AAA Five Diamond Award and the Forbes Travel Guide Five Star Award, two of the industry's most coveted accolades.



Suzie Mills

PROPERTY BRIEF The premiere property of the Trump® Hotel Collection, the iconic Trump International Hotel & Tower New York (www.trumpnewyorkhotel.com) is the only Forbes Five Star and AAA Five Diamond Hotel with Jean Georges' signature Five Star and Five Diamond Three Michelin-Star Restaurant in New York. Soaring above Columbus Circle, steps from the Time Warner Center and Lincoln Center, the 52-story structure has 176 luxurious guest rooms and suites, complete with European-style kitchens, marble bathrooms, and exceptional views of Central Park and the Manhattan skyline.

Were you surprised at how deep the economic crisis was, especially in New York, and have you seen signs of recovery?

Definitely. We were fortunate in that we grew our occupancy year over year. In these economic times, many properties are unable to achieve such positive results.

We were careful in our pricing to ensure our rate integrity. There is a fine line between balancing the rate and pushing the occupancy. Being a condo/hotel, we must make sure that each unit is sold daily so our owners receive a return on their investment.

We have seen an increase in leisure business, indicating a sign of recovery for us, but even in the darkest hours, our leisure business still came to us on the weekends. Now, as the economy begins to shape up, we see an increase in reservations booked in advance rather than last minute, as they were at the peak of the crisis.

During challenging times, how do you cut costs without losing the service excellence for which you're known?

Maintaining service excellence during these times is the biggest challenge. The first thing a guest notices is when the level of service declines. We have a 76 percent repeat guest factor, so any service changes would be noticeable, based upon previous stays. We made the conscious decision not to eliminate amenities during the downturn, but made sure to be sensible in other areas. We renegotiated our current vendor contracts and did not make frivolous purchases. From an engineering standpoint, we evaluated energy efficiencies that we could put in place, such as installing variable frequency drives and heat exchanges, helping cut costs on unnecessary expenditures. We were determined to save money at the bottom line, so not to impact the guest experience at all.

You have a very strong suite offering. Is there a consistent feel within that or is it different from suite to suite?

It is exactly the same guest experience from suite to suite. It does not vary from a standard room or a two-bedroom suite – you are guaranteed the same amenities and service as each guest in the hotel. Our guests are not treated any differently based on the rate they are paying. When you are staying at the Five-Star level, service is first and foremost.

When it comes to the actual layout, is that consistent as well?

Yes, it is consistent throughout every room and suite. We finished our \$30-million renovation on September 6, 2010, and all 176 rooms were completely redone with the same elegant decor.

In New York City, where there are first-rate restaurant offerings, how critical has your relationship with Jean-Georges been to the hotel?

We are very fortunate to be the home to Jean-Georges – he is an absolute dream to work with every day. He will do anything for the benefit of the hotel; he does all of our in-room dining as well. It is great having a Five Star, Five Diamond, Three Michelin-Star restaurant within our property. It helps us to promote our hotel effectively and vice versa. We value our relationship with Jean-Georges and his incredible team immensely.

How much of an effort have you put into the spa?

Plus One is the wonderful company that manages Trump Spa. We will be renovating the spa in April and will then have the same opportunity to revamp that area of the hotel, as we were able to do with our rooms and suites, enabling us to remain competitive within this market. We look forward to freshening up the changing rooms and massage rooms, and also adding another treatment room for our guests.

When the building was constructed 14 years ago, the gym and pool were the main focus. Now, our guests are more interested in receiving a luxury spa experience.

Has the corporate business been coming back?

The bulk of our business comes from our corporate clients, so in the past 18 months, we have worked closely with our key accounts to ensure that our guests who have been with us for 10 years will continue to stay with us. The last thing we want is for our most loyal guests to suddenly stop returning.

As a smaller property, we have had the opportunity to hold extensive discussions with our large corporate accounts, asking them what we can do to ensure guest loyalty. I am confident that because of this open dialogue, when the economy improves and we are faced with a rate increase, they will be forthcoming, knowing that we have been honest and worked with them the best that we could during the gloomier times.

What have you done to maintain a good working relationship with your owners during this difficult period?

It is key to make sure I maintain my relationships with each of my owners individually; this includes the Trump Organization and all 176 additional owners, so as you can imagine, it can be quite a balancing act.

It has been important to explain to them how we are looking to do business during the economic crisis. We send letters to our owners every quarter giving them an update on what has been happening. We have had great feedback from our owners in the past 18 months, who have all made money during that time, so they couldn't be happier. There are not many investments that can have such a positive return during a difficult economic period. ●

Executive City Suite Kitchen (left); Living Room (two on right)