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Kraków**

Grand Ascot Hotel in series 'Wide open for sustainable meetings'

2025-07-22

Join us for an exclusive interview with Izabela Milewska-Kaszuba, Sales Manager at Grand Ascot Hotel - a four-star property in the heart of Krakow, combining modern design with an intimate atmosphere.

Grand Ascot is a place that stands out not only for its high standard of service, elegant interiors and excellent location, but also for its responsible approach to the environment. This year, the hotel received the prestigious Good Travel Seal certificate, confirming the effectiveness of its sustainability efforts.

During the interview, Izabela Milewska-Kaszuba will share the behind-the-scenes of the environmental solutions implemented, talk about the challenges, and how the hotel combines guest comfort with care for the planet.

What measures in line with sustainability goals are implemented or will be implemented at your company?

concerning the facility:

Our environmental activities are focused on real reduction of negative environmental impact: We are implementing smart energy management systems and having renewable energy sources, which will reduce energy consumption in our facility in the coming years. Through digitization processes, we have significantly reduced our paper consumption. We now use only FSC-certified paper, which confirms its responsible origin. In 2024 we introduced water dispensers and reusable bottles for hotel guests, which allowed us to reduce the use of disposable packaging and products.

concerning labor aspects:

At Grand Ascot, we are committed to equal treatment - we do not allow discrimination based on age, race, gender, nationality, disability or religion. We follow transparent and fair recruitment procedures, offering our employees real opportunities for professional development. We respect human rights and make every effort to ensure that they are respected. We pay special attention to ensuring safe and hygienic working conditions. We actively counteract violence in the work environment. One of our employees participates in a team implementing a project called "Recommendations for providing effective assistance to victims in the work environment." Meetings of the team are organized by the Start Tango Foundation.

in an effort to promote the development and well-being of the team:

We invest in the development of our team - in 2024, the entire front desk department participated in training on effective customer service. Our employees also expanded their knowledge in the areas of effective social media advertising and data protection. For 2025, we have planned further development activities - including training in handling the demanding guest, telephone sales



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techniques, as well as communication and teamwork.

We are involved in the education of young people - in 2024 we held three meetings with hotel school students, presenting the realities of working in the hotel industry. In addition, as part of our cooperation, we offer internships to students of the Economic School Complex No. 1.

We were invited as guests to participate in a debate held as part of the Kapucyńska 2 Tourism Forum, organized by the Economic School Complex No. 1 in Krakow.

We support a healthy lifestyle - we offer subsidies for the Multisport program and private health care. In 2024, 20% of our employees used the Multisport card.

We promote environmentally friendly forms of transportation - we are a participant in the "Bike to Work" program organized by the University of Krakow. Currently, 14% of our staff commute to work by bicycle.

regarding the supplier chain:

We work with suppliers in our region, thereby supporting the development of the local economy and building lasting business relationships based on trust.

10% of the food products we use are locally sourced, which not only supports local farmers and producers, but also contributes to reducing the carbon footprint associated with transportation.

regarding business management / operations strategy:

We have prioritized goals centered around key areas of our business, such as environmental care and green operations, investment in hotel infrastructure, developing partnerships with local communities, regularly monitoring progress on our sustainability strategy, and implementing employee education and training programs. Most importantly, we have implemented monitoring of progress in achieving sustainability goals through the introduction of cyclical reporting of results and evaluation of activities, ensuring effective commitment of resources and adaptation of strategies to changing market and environmental conditions by, among other things, monitoring: energy consumption, water consumption, CO2 emission levels and carbon footprint.

Which of the implemented measures work best?

As part of our hotel's sustainability strategy, we focus on activities that have a real impact on reducing environmental impact, are in line with guest expectations and contribute to improving efficiency. Among the initiatives implemented, the following work particularly well:

Reducing the use of disposable products, including water bottles. Our guests can enjoy fresh water at any time of the day or night thanks to the installation of water dispensers, which are located in the hotel's corridors. This year we plan to install a dispenser in the Conference Room.

Introducing an additional breakfast box - we are reducing food waste while creating an extremely convenient solution for guests to pack a second breakfast.



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Implementing a non-waste food solution - we sell surplus food from breakfasts in “surprise packages” thanks to the To Good to Go app.

We have reduced paper consumption through digitization. We use the Smart Hotel app to provide information about the hotel's services and offers, which reduces paper printing.

Why did you decide to go for Good Travel Seal certification? What does the process itself look like? What surprised you most during its course?

We have been Good Travel Seal certified since March 2025. In 2024, we joined a series of training courses co-organized by the GCM and the Travindy Foundation on sustainability, where we received support in preparing for certification. Also in 2024, we also qualified for the ETSM2030 program. ETSM2030 is a project funded by the European Union that supports small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMPs) in obtaining sustainability certification and knowledge, and creates an interactive network of SMPs working for eco-development. The premise of the project is to rebuild the tourism economy after the COVID-19 pandemic in accordance with the concept of sustainability. Due to the fact that I participated in all the trainings, I undertook the coordination of the certification process. Every department in the hotel was involved in creating the documentation. The whole process of preparing for certification turned out to be more time-consuming than we had originally anticipated. We were given access to a dedicated panel where we were required to complete it in detail with every element required for certification, both contracts, photos and relevant materials. The form was divided into several categories, such as “Food & Product,” “Caring for People,” “Good Employment,” “Reducing Waste” and others. Each of them contained detailed questions, and completing them - along with preparing descriptions and adding photos and relevant documents - was a demanding process. It culminated in an audit - a key moment in our journey to become certified.

Do customers expect your company to have sustainable solutions and certifications?

More and more of our guests and customers are interested in sustainable hotel solutions or pay attention to whether we are certified to demonstrate our commitment to this issue. This is one of the factors in choosing an accommodation or conference venue. However, although price still remains a key factor in choosing a hotel. Our goal is to show that sustainability does not mean giving up or compromising, but can be an added value for both the client and the hotel guest.

What trends in event organization have you observed recently?

We continue to see a trend of interest in the hybrid formula, which combines stationary events with online streaming. Such a solution allows you to expand your reach and reach a wider range of participants, regardless of their location. Increasingly, events are being enriched with elements that promote a healthy lifestyle through a well-balanced menu with limited meat. At the same time, the emphasis on environmental aspects is growing. Organizers are eager to use biodegradable materials, striving to reduce the use of water, paper and plastic. Great attention is also being paid to the location of events - places well connected to public transportation are preferred, which fits in with the idea of reducing the carbon footprint of participants.



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Where do you get your knowledge and inspiration on the topic of organizing sustainable meetings?

As a hotel committed to sustainability, we are constantly looking for proven and innovative solutions that allow us to organize meetings in a way that is responsible to the environment, the local community and future generations. We participate in industry events and trainings. We follow and implement proven solutions used by hotels and conference centers, talk to other hotels that, like us, want to act smarter and more responsibly, and listen carefully to our guests and business partners. For us, sustainability is not a goal, but a path we strive to walk every day better than yesterday.