

9 | The Hilton Hotel chain

Starting point

- 1** What types of hotel do you normally stay in? Which was the best / worst? Why?
- 2** What type of hotel would you choose for each of these situations? Think about: location, facilities, atmosphere and branding. Give reasons for your choices.
 - 1 for a three-day international trade fair
 - 2 for a short one-night visit to a client about a hundred kilometres away
 - 3 a weekend away with family or friends

Video comprehension

- 3** VIDEO Watch the video. Number the topics in the order Dagmar talks about them (1–5).
 - a How the Hilton chain is competitive ____
 - b About the Hilton brand and location ____
 - c Facilities ____
 - d Future plans and improvements ____
 - e How customers choose a hotel ____
- 4** VIDEO Watch the video again. Complete these notes with facts and figures.

Number of Hilton hotels around the world (approximately): ¹ _____

Number of different brands: ² _____

Location of European headquarters: ³ _____

Location of Middle East and Africa headquarters: ⁴ _____

Location of Asia Pacific headquarters: ⁵ _____

Founded by Conrad Hilton: over ⁶ _____ years ago.

Facilities in Hilton Düsseldorf include meetings and conference rooms, ballroom for ⁷ _____ people and ⁸ _____ car parking spaces.

Number of countries: in over ⁹ _____ worldwide.

Number of hotels in China: ¹⁰ _____ or _____ hotels.

Planned number in China over the next five years: ¹¹ _____

Speaking

- 5** Work with a partner. Imagine you are going to start your own hotel. Discuss:
 - 1 Who are your main clients? 3 What is your location?
 - 2 What kind of facilities are there? 4 How are you competitive with other hotels at a similar price?
- 6** Present your new hotel to the class. After the presentations, compare your hotel with the others. Which pair offered the most competitive hotel? Why?

Video script

Dagmar Mühle is the general manager of the Hilton Hotel in Dusseldorf, Germany.

Tell us about the Hilton Hotel chain.

Hilton is the best known hotel brand name in the world. We have altogether about 3,600 hotels around the world and growing. We are divided into ten different brands: Waldorf, Astoria, Conrad being the luxury, Hilton Hotels, Double Tree Hotels and Embassy Suite Hotels in the sort of mid-market segment and full service and then more, the sort of, er, limited service which is excellent products but not so much service, it is like the Hilton Garden in Staten and these sort of brands.

We're here in Europe, our headquarters are in London in the UK and then we, the next region is Middle East and Africa – they're based in Dubai, Asia Pacific based in Singapore and then the Americas and South America which is the biggest region. So it's a very, er, the brand Hilton Hotels, were founded by Conrad Hilton over 80 years ago and has developed which, into, I guess, you know, the most recognised hotel name worldwide.

How do customers choose a hotel?

I think the customer chooses destination more than brand, you know, to start off with, if anyone wants to come to London or to Dusseldorf or to Berlin, er, they may, you know look at their destination first, and then they may look what's there and what's on offer and what hotels are there where they can stay.

What areas do you have to compete on?

It is product, it's location, it's service, it's the different facilities in the hotel that we offer, for example we have a very good meetings and conference product and a ballroom which can seat a 1000 people. We have 350 car parking spaces, so we are offering some unique features here. Er, and of course service.

What makes Hilton competitive?

The fact that we are in so many different locations. I couldn't tell you now but I think we are in over 120 countries around the world, so there are not many places where there is no Hilton branded hotel. Then we have a fantastic loyalty programme, our Hilton Honours and, um, that enables the regular user to collect points and Airmiles at the same time, so it is another incentive to stay and to sleep with Hilton rather than at the competition.

How can Hilton continue to improve?

We need more hotels in certain destinations, i.e. in China and in India and, er, we have only just started – we have about 8, 9 hotels in China, but the plan is to, er, build and open another 50 over the next five years. Some of our hotels are older and we need to make sure that we keep them fresh and refurbished, like this one here which was refurbished five years ago – the building is 40 years old but they need to be kept up to date.

Worksheet answer key

1 Answers will vary.

2 Some possible answers:

- 1 For a three-day international trade fair: People will want luxury to mid-market standard hotels near the trade fair with good transport links. The hotel will need excellent business services and facilities for meals, private meetings and networking.
- 2 For a short one-night visit to a client about a hundred kilometres away: People might not require the very best kind of hotel because it's only for one night. It needs to be convenient in terms of transportation or parking.
- 3 A weekend away with family or friends: This will depend on personal choice. If the person already travels a lot for their work, then perhaps they will want something different from the usual corporate hotel chain atmosphere.

3 a 4 b 1 c 3 d 5 e 2

4 1 3600

2 10

3 London

4 Dubai

5 Singapore

6 80

7 1000

8 350

9 120

10 8 or 9

11 50