

STRAND PALACE HOTEL

STRAND PALACE BECOMES A KEY
CENTRAL LONDON HOTEL TO
RECEIVE GLOBAL SECURE
ACCREDITATION



Prestigious London property, Strand Palace Hotel, sets the benchmark for
global security standards

Summary

The Strand Palace Hotel has been an iconic site in central London, welcoming guests with warmth and hospitality since 1909. Owned by global investment company London & Regional Hotels, the property has recently received a multi-million refurbishment that brings affordable luxury to the centre of London, just a stone's throw from Covent Garden.

With 785 rooms, the hotel is popular with businesspeople and leisure travellers, offering multiple restaurants, bars and private dining in central London as well as an iconic afternoon tea experience. Thousands of people visit the venue on any given day and the hotel is truly a 24-7-365 operation.

Challenge

Morne Landman is Head of Safety & Security at the Strand Palace. He runs a team of five security and safety officers that are responsible for the well-being of all guests at the hotel, night and day. The team is extremely experienced with an average of ten years per member of staff, while Morne has more than 15 years at the hotel.

During the week corporate travel is particularly important to the Strand Palace – with up to 80 percent of guests staying for business.

At a glance

Challenge: Following recent high-profile incidents at hotels worldwide, the security team sought external assessment of the hotel's security.

Approach: Global Secure Accreditation undertook a rigorous assessment of security standards at the Strand Palace Hotel. The security assessment process was independently supervised by SFJ Awards, who then tested the results of the assessment against the accredited standard.

Results: The accreditation enables the Strand Palace Hotel to:

- ❖ Secure more corporate business by demonstrating a duty of care to its guests and staff.
- ❖ Improve the RFP process surrounding security.
- ❖ Obtain key external feedback on current security measures at the property to support the internal team.
- ❖ Maintain knowledge of cutting-edge safety and security news and information via the GSA membership platform.

About Strand Palace Hotel



5-Star
luxury
hotel



Central
London
location



785 rooms &
suites over 9
floors



Multi-million
pound
refurbishment

“The Global Secure accreditation is essentially a KPI that sets us apart from our competitor hotels”

- **Kelly O’Neill, Director of Sales.**

During the early part of 2019 David MacRae, Strand Palace’s Managing Director, recognised the importance of seeking an independent assessment of the hotel’s security. He comments: “The hotel has always taken health and safety and security very seriously, not least because of the size of the property; the bigger the property the bigger the risk.”

Hotels are potentially high-profile targets for theft as well as terrorism. Recent widely reported incidents in London and Paris prompted Morne to seek external assessment of the hotel’s security. “The hotel management are extremely supportive of our efforts to ensure the highest levels of security and we are pretty sure that we are doing a good job, but the opportunity to have this assessed and accredited by a trusted third party was important. The increased frequency of terrorist incidents involving hotels has made guests more conscious of the issue. The landscape is constantly changing, with new threats such as cyber-attacks on the hotel’s infrastructure,” continues Morne.

“We were already instilling the mindset that the hotel’s security is not solely the responsibility of the security team. We act as ambassadors for the entire hotel team, to help them have security in mind when dealing with guests”.

The GSA Solution

Global Secure Accreditation (GSA) has developed an independent assessment process for hotel security. GSA’s assessment is independently accredited by SFJ Awards, an organisation approved by the Qualification Regulators to provide qualifications globally. SFJ Awards’ expertise lies in the ability to create, establish and independently assess operational standards that objectively demonstrate how businesses, organisations and individuals are performing.

The Strand Palace prepared for the GSA assessment, which was fully supported by the hotel’s management and IT team, by conducting a thorough review of all paperwork related to processes and procedures. “The GSA assessment was extremely professional,” comments Morne. “It was very thorough. The assessor’s knowledge was excellent. He explained the entire process and had clearly done his research on the hotel before he arrived. This immediately put me at ease.” The GSA assessment took an entire day and the assessor analysed processes across the entire hotel geography. “It was definitely not a box ticking exercise because the accreditation is evidence based. The amount of evidence the assessor took away on our policies and procedures gave us a great deal of confidence in our processes. The whole assessment process was very professional.”

Results

The Strand Palace Hotel was accredited by Global Secure Accreditation and SFJ Awards in August 2019. GSA provided the hotel with certification and a thorough (20 page) report on the hotel's practices and processes.

The commercial and reservations team have also identified the benefits of receiving the Global Secure accreditation. Director of Sales, Kelly O'Neill takes up the story: "The Global Secure accreditation is essentially a KPI that sets us apart from our competitor hotels," she comments. "We are regularly asked to complete detailed RFP information for large corporates and travel management companies. These often determine how much corporate business we conduct. The accreditation has really helped in the RFP process with the answering of questions around safety and security of guests. Questions asked usually cover issues such as elevator safety, guest room floors, deadlocks, female-only programs and security cameras. Providing evidence of an additional accreditation where our answers have been fully and independently assessed, has proven extremely beneficial when dealing with global travel managers. They can see that safety and security is extremely important here at the hotel."

The accreditation has been pivotal in securing big contracts. Kelly explains, "We approached a prestigious non-profit organisation that adjoins business and people for pressing global issues. A global summit is held every year and global businesses fly in their young leaders to attend. With last year's summit being held in London, we wanted to be the preferred hotel for businesses to book for their staff."

Kelly continues, "At the time we were working on the accreditation which of course we told the organisers. It helped us stand out and hand to heart I believe we got so much of the business because clients felt trust in sending their staff here."

Morne believes that the accreditation provides reassurance to hotel guests. "We had an incident where a guest had left their possessions unattended and was asking questions about our levels of security. The Global Secure accreditation enabled us to answer these with confidence and the guest was extremely impressed by our certification." The hotel is also less likely to be required to host visits from corporate security teams.



Ultimately with an increasing number of guests requesting information on hotel security (The Strand Palace receives multiple requests on this subject on a weekly basis) the hotel can differentiate itself from its competition and demonstrate its duty of care to its guests thanks to the accreditation. It has proved an extremely effective tool to provide guests and corporates with reassurance that the hotel is best in class in terms of its security processes. "You can assess yourself and believe you are doing a great job. Everybody in the team including your managers can think you are doing a great job but when a third party comes in and confirms it, there is a huge difference. And that is what the Global Secure accreditation brings for us" adds Morne.