

Chicago's Best Hotels for Business

By Michelle Evans
March 23, 2009

Business travelers require seamless WiFi connections, a knowledgeable concierge and top-notch meeting facilities to get the job done. But how do their employers — the ones paying the bills — determine the best business-travel value?

Crain's worked with Chicago-based Internet travel site Orbitz Worldwide Inc. to develop a ranking of the best hotels for business in Chicago.

This first-ever *Crain's* ranking, based on surveys of business travelers and popularity with guests, includes all types of hotels, from notable outposts of large chains to chic boutiques. The goal was to name the best places around Chicago to put up out-of-town colleagues, entertain clients or hold a business meeting, without blowing the company's budget.

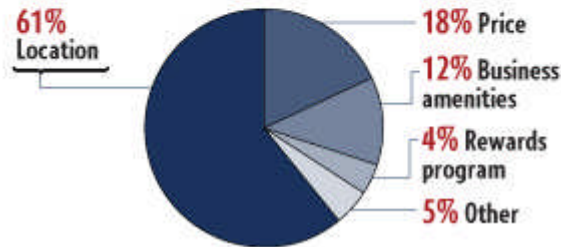
Some readers may be surprised that venerable inns like the Peninsula, Ritz-Carlton, Four Seasons and Park Hyatt didn't make the cut. But with a slowing economy, price has become a bigger factor for business travelers — a reality that's reflected in the survey results.

"If they are traveling at all, they are finding ways to do it for less," Joe Brancatelli, a longtime travel writer and corporate travel consultant, says of today's business-class clientele. "The places that are holding up the best are the lower end."

ONLINE POLL: BEST BUSINESS HOTELS

Crain's asked ChicagoBusiness.com readers about their business hotel preferences.

WE ASKED: What's most important to you when booking a business hotel?



[CLICK HERE](#) to view complete survey results in a popup window.



Click here to take an interactive virtual tour of the top downtown hotels, or go to www.ChicagoBusiness.com/hotelmap.

Survey methodology

Crain's worked with Orbitz Worldwide Inc. to develop a value ranking to determine the best hotels for business in Chicago. The ranking gives equal weight to the hotel's popularity and average user rating from business travelers using one of Orbitz's Web sites. Popularity was determined by measuring gross bookings from Jan. 1 to Nov. 21, 2008, as a percentage of the hotel's total capacity. Bookings included those made for Sunday through Wednesday evenings on Orbitz.com and all those made on OrbitzForBusiness.com, Orbitz's corporate travel management Web site. The user review score was calculated by measuring the average review rating based on all Orbitz business travelers for each property.

No. 2 Amalfi Hotel Chicago

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20 W. Kinzie St.

(312) 395-9000

www.amalfihotelchicago.com

\$209-\$349 per night

215 rooms

In 2004, Chicago's Hostmark Hospitality Group transformed a building that once housed airline crews into a chic boutique hotel.

The result is a place where doormen are called "impressionists" and the general manager is known as the "maestro."

Inspired by the Amalfi Coast — Italy's version of the French Riviera — the décor features warm orange and turquoise hues. Each room has free high-speed Internet, hot chocolate, CDs, books, magazines and Aveda spa products.

"We wanted the rooms to have a very residential feel," Maestro Brian Cooney says.

Continental breakfast is available on each floor, allowing guests to eat in their robes and slippers. Each evening, managers host a free cocktail reception in the lounge.



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No. 18 Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza

350 W. Mart Center Drive

(312) 361-0648

www.martplaza.com

\$129-\$169 per night; 521 rooms

Adjacent to the Merchandise Mart, the Holiday Inn will finish a \$26-million renovation this spring. More than 20,000 square feet of meeting space on three floors can handle groups as small as 24 and as large as 1,000, with the latest audio-visual technology and high-speed Web access available. The soundproofed guest rooms have spacious work desks and ergonomic furniture.
