



THE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES ADOPTED BY HOTELS TO GO GREEN

Syed Aasif M. Bukhari

Assistant Professor, Department of Tourism Studies, Central University of Kashmir.

Abstract

Due to increasing awareness in environmental issues Hospitality sectors as well as its guests are becoming increasingly interested in green products and services; thus many hotels are going green or are considering becoming green to preserve the environment. In hotel industry, Green Hotels are defined as lodging establishments that have made a commitment to diverse ecologically sound practices such as saving water, energy, reducing solid waste etc. The purpose of this paper is to study conceptually the sustainable practices adopted by Green hotels. The study has shown how techniques like Recycling and Reuse, Energy Efficiency and Conservation, Commitment to Environmental Practices; and managing otherwise neglected areas like Lighting, Pest Management, use of Hazardous and Toxic Substances, Transportation, Purchasing, Water Efficiency and Conservation, Landscape are some of the sustainable practices adopted by Green hotels. The paper will try to argue on the similar lines.

Keywords: *Environment, Hospitality Sector, Hotel Industry, Green Hotels, Energy Efficiency, Pest Management, Toxic Substances.*

Introduction

Tourism is recognized as one of the world's largest profitable industries hence making it an economically enticing thus helps in the development of many countries. However, the benefits of tourism are often accompanied by many negative environmental impacts. These include: air and water pollution, leakage of the community revenue, degradation of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, etc.

Hotel industry which forms a large part of tourism is forced to re-think and act in the pursuit of conserving environment. As a result the hotel sector is increasingly proactive in the adoption of environmental practices and this number continues to grow. Eco friendly or Green practices in business are not only cost effective but also fashionable and notable act.

Green hotels refers to the hotels or accommodations which have least effect on environment by introducing and adopting certain bottom line practices such as energy-saving measures, use of water-saving equipment and techniques, avoiding wastefully-packaged products and recycling, creating green teams for review and revaluation, Encouraging staff and Guests to be eco-friendly and finally green purchase policy, The definition is supported is by (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 1999; Middleton & Hawkins, 1998) according to which Green Hotels are environmental friendly hotels whose managers are eager to institute a program that saves energy and water, managing waste and educating guests about the environment.

Hence Hotel industry need to incorporate green practices in their operation in order to have least effect on environment keeping in view several factors like location, availability of resources etc. Therefore the objective of this study is to determine best practice adopted by hotels to go green.

Review of Literature

According to (Shrum, 2005) the term Green refers to Environmental Friendly. From an economic point of view Gupta (2006) defines Greening as a corporate environment performance in meeting stockholders. Green practices according to Gupta and Sharma (2002) are eco-friendly management principles in which executive levels convert natural resources into better products or outputs .

The term "green hotel" can be used synonymously with "a sustainable hotel", "an environment friendly hotel," or "an eco-friendly hotel," During the last decades Hotels are striving to adopt eco-friendly practices to minimize the environmental effect. According to the Lockyer (2007) green hotels refers to sustainable business practices meant to increase the business potential without damaging the environment and working in harmony with society. Some scholars defined green hotel as an environmentally sensitive hotel that operates its business in a manner that minimizes degradation of the environment (Iwanowski, 2003). The specific areas of focus are energy efficiency, recycling, water conservation, and clean air practices (Bohdanowicz, 2005). Similarly, Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) define a green hotel as a lodging facility committed to ecological practices such as saving of energy, water and waste.



Energy: Stipanuk (2002) defines energy as ‘electricity, fossil fuels, water and sewage, certain vehicle fuel and in some instances purchased steam, hot water and chilled water.’ Energy costs usually count for four to six percent of hotel’s revenue and the trend has been driven upwards over the last few years (Stipanuk, 2002).

Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) underlining Stipanuk’s (2002) claim that ‘energy costs are one of the largest non-staff cost items on a hotel’s profit and loss account’. According to (Heung, 2006) hotels who have adopted positive sustainable practices and energy efficient equipments are successful in reducing their expenditures by 10 – 25 percent.

Water: Water is also considered a source of energy (Stipanuk, 2002). Water is in fact a crucial resource for the hospitality industry due to its scarcity and its role in a number of activities on property such as the kitchen, laundry, bathrooms outdoor facilities and housekeeping. (Baker, 2005). Webster (2000) figured out that only five percent of a hotel’s overall water use is utilized for eating and drinking while the larger part is used for cleaning (including showering, bathing, laundering and dishwashing). In order to reduce the water consumption hotels can invest in reuse of grey water, rain water collection water saving systems such as, water flow controllers, faucet aerators and push button activated showers in public areas.

Waste: According to Baker (2005) in hotels costs can be greatly reduced by waste reduction and replacing conventional waste disposal activities with practices aiming for reuse, disassembly, recycling and composting’. Proper waste management is a cost-cutting measure as well as an environmental impact-reducing measure. According to (Baker ,2008) The food & beverage department in hotels generates various organic and solid wastes such as aluminum cans, packaging and food waste, cooking oils glass bottles, and corks. The front office and housekeeping department also generates huge amount of solid waste such as paper and cardboard waste, cleaning materials and plastic, packaging toner cartridges and many other wastes from other departments of hotel. (Stipanuk, 2002).suggested that Minimizing waste starts in the procurement department, ensuring that only products with a minimal packaging are acquired also working with suppliers that have a proper environmental policy.

What motivate Hotels to Go Green?

Previous studies have identified different motives for hotels to go green. (Chan, 2006) pointed out three major motivations which drive Hotels to go green these are

1. Government rules and regulations towards green practices have pressured the hotels to go green
2. Monetary or financial benefits are the second motivator that can be realized from green practices (González & León, 2001).
3. The third motivation for hotels adopting green practices is fostering positive public relations and marketing (Tzschentke et al., 2004).

Methodology and Results

<p>Recycling, Reuse and Waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of recycle bins where it is clearly marked for aluminum, glass, plastic, mixed paper, cardboard, newspaper, and toner cartridges • Recycling bins provided in the following areas: office/administrative area, lobby/registration, and guest rooms. • Donation of hard-to-recycle items • Reuse old linen, towels and robes • Using previous stack of papers for drafts scratch paper or internal memos • Donation of leftover food and used amenity bottles and containers to charity or local shelters. • Select products shipped with recyclable packaging or less packing • In order to eliminate plastic, containers packing switch to bulk-dispensed amenities • Optional linen and towel reuse programs for guests who stay multiple nights. • Compost food and landscape waste with local garbage composting company. • Use corn key cards as such biodegradable products completely compost within 18 months.

<p>Purchase and Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many hotels have created an environmental purchasing policy and are training their employees for the same. • Purchase and use of recycled content products, such as; envelopes, office paper, paper towels, remanufactured toner cartridges, toilet paper, carpet and much more. • Purchase Energy Star appliances or used equipment wherever possible. • Purchase from vendors/suppliers who can sell eco-friendly products.
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- Hotels purchase goods that are durable and can be reused.
- Motivating employees for use of public transport, bicycles or hotel staff buses.
- Encourage employees for alternative mode of transportation such as carpools, electric, hybrid or bio-diesel vehicles via incentives and are providing preferential parking for the same
- Provide your guests with bicycles, walking maps, and information on public transportation.

Energy efficiency and conservation

- Installed motion sensors in low traffic areas.
- Use of energy-efficient light bulbs, such as (LED)Light Emitting Diode or compact florescent lights (CFL).
- Use of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal power when and where possible
- Regular maintenance on HVAC equipment. (Heat, Air Ventilation, and Cooling) .
- Install low-flow showerheads (.5 to 2 gpm) and sink aerators (.25 gpm to .5 gpm) for hand and face washing and 2.2 gpm for dish washing).
- Install energy efficient, double-pane windows or use natural light from the sun to reduce energy consumption throughout the day.
- In order to reduce energy loss and solar heat emission hotels have added window film to windows.
- Hotels which have pool and/or hot tubs; have installed solar PV system and air-source heat pump .
- Instillation of an ozone laundry system.
- Reduced the need of Air conditioning hotels have Installed ceiling fans to promote air circulation.

Commitment to Green Practices

- Hotel forms a Green Team or an Environmental Committee that is responsible for ensuring that all the environmental practices, in which the hotel is participating, are being performed timely and correctly.
- Hotel's environmental or sustainability efforts are visibly communicated to the staff, vendors, shareholders, as well as guests,
- Hotel employees are motivated and Encouraged via incentives to participate and prepare reports that would help to focus on the areas for improvement in terms of sustainability.
- Provide yearly training to staff on green practices.
- Counsel your new staff or old staff to;
 1. Turn off heating/air conditioning, lights, in unoccupied rooms
 2. Check and respond for leaking of toilets and faucets
 3. Continually check for and power down unused hotel equipment (i.e., kitchen exhaust fans) that have been left running
 4. Report opportunities to reduce resource consumption.

Lighting

- In order to detect the presence or absence of people hotels use occupancy sensors
- Hotels use automatic key lighting or create reminder cards ; To turn off lights when leaving a room.
- During daytime hotels prefer natural lighting
- Replace incandescent bulbs with energy efficient light bulbs, such as compact florescent lights (CFL) or light-emitting diode (LED)
- In meeting or Board rooms hotels use dimmer controls.

Water Efficiency and Conservation

- Replaced all pre-1992 toilets and urinals with 1.5 gpf toilets or less.
- Hotels have installed low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators with 2.2 gpm for faucets and aerators and 2.5 gpm for low-flow showerheads.
- In order to conserve water Hotels post signs in restaurants, kitchen, laundry and restrooms,
- Regularly check for leaks and repairs.
- Laundry washers, dryers and kitchen dishwashers are filled to recommend capacity for each cycle.
- Use the coolest water temperature for washers, dryers and dishwashers.

Housekeeping Cleaning Agents (Chemicals)

- Keep all chemical products away from food storage areas, and store them in their original containers with tight fitting lids.
- Use eco-friendly cleaning products and substances as possible.
- Use cleaning products that are free from lead, mercury and low VOC.
- Laundry detergents should have little or no phosphates.

Landscape

- Hotels ensure that the irrigation system is working and properly
- Use of low volume irrigation system.
- Plants are grouped with similar water requirements.
- Trees and Plants are landscaped that can tolerate the soil, climate, and water availability.
- Purchase plants that are native to your areas.
- Learn how to attract butterflies, hummingbirds and other birds
- Consider adding a composting or worm composting bin to create important nutrients for your garden and an eco-friendly way to dispose of food waste.
- Create an integrated pest management plan for non-toxic pest control

Conclusion

Hotel industry is growing magnanimously, so are its negative impacts. For that the Green concept is very much emerging. The developers of this industry are much concerned about its negative impacts hence drafted sustainability policies and procedures to curb the negative environmental impacts.

As reflected by the researcher; hotels have adopted sustainable practices to preserve the environment and to go green. Furthermore the study framework has developed on which the research is based. so the need of the hour is to recognize the emerging green concepts & abide by strictly following the procedure to achieve the same, besides that awareness about emerging green strategies among different stake holders is also of utmost importance.

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