

Chapter 11

Partnering With The Community

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Chapter 11: Partnering With The Community

Once your hotel has taken environmental conservation measures, you should share your efforts with your suppliers, customers and other business partners. By assuming a proactive stance you will encourage others to learn about environmental protection and give your hotel more exposure within the business world. This section describes quick and easy ways to let people know how and why you are making changes to benefit the environment.



(Photo 11.1) Environmental friendly hotel guests will choose your property over others if they know about your environment efforts.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW AND WHY?

Environmental friendly hotel guests will choose your property over others if they know about your environmental efforts. Guest recommendations and word of mouth are the best publicity.

Informing your employees and supporters is also important, because hotels with outstanding environmental performance overwhelmingly agree that employee participation and understanding of the programmes are key to their success. Their daily contact with your guests puts them in the best position to educate your guests as well.

By publicising your environmental efforts to the community, your hotel becomes established as an environmental leader, leading to more mass media reports of your hotel's successful environmental programme.

COMMUNICATION AND MOTIVATION

You can publicise your environmental efforts to various parties using the approaches described below :

a. Communication with Guests

- Use placards to inform guests of environmental efforts in their rooms. For example, if you're making daily towel and sheet changes optional, place a card imprinted with an environmental message on towel racks.
- Use table tents in restaurants and lobbies. Let guests know how much energy is being saved by using energy-efficient lights or how much waste is kept from landfills by finding new uses for old towels and linens.
- Send an environmental message with reservation confirmations.
- Incorporate an environmental message into in-room packages, include your environmental mission statement in guest information packages or present it at check-in.
- Place recycling bins in guest rooms or hallways, and provide instructions nearby. It can inform guests of the efforts you are making. Although recycling bins require an initial capital investment, their cost should quickly be recovered by gaining revenue from selling collected waste to the recycler.
- Give guests the option at check-out to contribute an extra dollar to an environmental or wildlife group of your choosing.



(Photo 11.2) Reward employee with good environmental performance or green innovative idea.

b. Communication with Employees and Supporters

- Encourage others to follow your lead by writing articles about environmental benefits, performance and cost savings in employee newsletters and annual reports.
- Repeat the green message at staff events, such as staff picnics or annual board meetings.
- Designate coordinators of environmental activities (e.g. environmental ambassadors). Their responsibilities should include educating other staff about the programme.
- Start an incentive programme for new green ideas. Reward individuals and recognise the best “green” departments.
- When new staff members join the hotel, their orientation training should include a session on the environmental programme of the hotel.

c. Communication with Members of the Community

- Participate in or sponsor environmental activities such as beach clean-ups, tree planting and green fund raising projects in your community. These activities often stimulate positive media response.
- Consider donating used items to charities, churches, schools or other organisations.
- Apply for green awards to gain formalised recognition for your efforts.
- Host tours of your hotel to share with others the environmental efforts your hotel has taken.
- Report on your environmental initiatives within the local newspaper, magazines, and other publications or electronic media.



(Photo 11.3) Participate in or sponsor environmental activities, in your community.

Case Studies



a. Case study 11.1 – A Hotel in U.S.A.

Unused and excess food is provided to 185 food banks. Towels, bed linens, pillows and partially used individual soaps and shampoo are greatly appreciated by charities working with the homeless.

(Source: Green Hotelier Issue 25 & 26 May 2002)

b. Case study 11.2 – A Hotel in Caracas, Venezuela

A hotel in Caracas initiated an extensive campaign to raise awareness of its environmental programme, both internally and externally, using stickers, caps, posters and stationery distributed throughout the group's Latin American hotels. As a consequence, an oil company based in Venezuela, itself keen to maintain a positive environmental image, called the hotel to book a conference at which environmental issues were to be discussed. The conference took place over a week, generating 350 room / nights and a total revenue of US\$40,000.

(Source: Environmental Management for Hotels produced by International Hotels Environment Initiative)



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