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An Investigation of sustainable environmental practices and consumer attitudes & behaviors toward hotel bathroom amenities

Edward James Bobbett
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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AN INVESTIGATION OF SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES
AND CONSUMER ATTITUDES & BEHAVIORS TOWARD
HOTEL BATHROOM AMENITIES

by

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A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment
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Part One

Introduction

In the 1980s hotel operators became concerned with greening and sustainability. It was at this time the hospitality industry began focusing on energy efficiency and the sustainable development of tourism (Chan & Lam, 2001; Welford, Ytterhus, & Eligh, 1999). Since then, a global trend has emerged as hotels introduce programs to reduce the amount of resources used and the overall environmental impact they have on the planet, or their carbon footprint.

The hospitality industry has introduced programs such as recycling in both the front and back of the house, energy-efficient lighting, towel re-use programs, linen exchange programs, Green Certifications, and alternative ways to provide bathroom amenities, especially toiletries, in order to operate more sustainably (Lee & Heo, 2009; Millar, 2009). However, the industry can do much more to become even more sustainable.

The paper is divided into three parts. In Part One, the purpose, statement of problem, objectives, and justification will be discussed. Part Two will review the scholarly literature and ascertain the prominent themes essential to this paper. This paper first explores the corporate social responsibility programs that companies are implementing. Further topics investigated within the literature review include sustainable environmental practices currently utilized in the hospitality industry and how consumer attitudes, rating agency regulations and certifications impact hotel operators directly and indirectly. Other topics include guest satisfaction and behaviors leading to more sustainable practices. The final section provides managerial suggestions for implementing recommendations that will assist hotels in their endeavors to become more environmentally sustainable.
**Purpose**

The purpose of this professional paper is to study the impact of eliminating hotel bathroom toiletries on guest satisfaction by using a case study approach. It is expected that the hotel operator should make educated and informed decisions regarding the elimination of hotel bathroom toiletries without impacting guest satisfaction. It is also the purpose of this paper to explore ways that greater sustainability can be achieved within the industry and reduce the industry’s impact on the planet.

Specifically, the paper will investigate the following topics: (1) to examine the corporate social responsibility steps that have occurred in the past in the hospitality industry; (2) to discuss the relationship between elimination of hotel bathroom toiletries and guest satisfaction/the overall guest experience; (3) to explore the impact of third-party certification standards and rating agencies policies concerning environmental issues; and (4) to review the recent trends for sustainability occurring in the hospitality industry.

**Statement of objective.** Hotel operations that are considering the elimination of hotel bathroom amenities or seek more innovative and environmentally sustainable ways to provide such items to the guests have a number of considerations to contemplate. Are guests willing to accept this change? These changes can be viewed both positively and negatively? Guests may perceive a reduction in value provided by the hotel and may or may not return. Equally damaging, the hotel’s level of service may be viewed differently, reducing guest satisfaction, both perceived and measured. Conversely, guests may appreciate the ease of being green while traveling, as some guests want to do their part for the environment. The objective of this paper is to discuss how the elimination of hotel bathroom toiletries might affect the hospitality industry as it works to reduce its impact on the environment and to explore consumer expectations and
evaluate sustainable consumer behavior relating to bathroom toiletries. This effect could be measured in a variety of ways, from waste reduction to cost savings, as well as by the benefits an organization receives when it becomes more environmentally aware.

**Justifications.** The hospitality industry must increasingly be more environmentally responsible and sustainable. This has many benefits including, but not limited to, better relations with government agencies and communities, a reduced impact on the planet’s resources, increased employee morale, and an increased appeal to guests.

Providing bathroom amenities can affect the bottom line in two ways. The first is the cost of purchasing products to be displayed in guest bathrooms that are later utilized by guests. The second is the cost of the waste removal and waste management of the toiletries. During the 1980s, research within the hospitality industry focused primarily on energy efficiency, and it has only been since the mid-1990s that municipal waste management garnered any attention (Chan & Lam, 2001). Chan & Lam developed a model that would assist hotel operators in determining their waste output, creating a baseline, and a way to measure reduction in waste output. This study and similar ones which support waste reduction will be discussed in the second section.

**Constraints.** There are several constraints that must be considered in this paper, primarily the lack of data collection. Most of the data gathered and utilized within this paper are from secondary sources, resulting in many inferences made by the author. Several recommendations presented in Part Three are implied with support from research discussed in the literature review and from interviews conducted.

Another constraint is the generalizability of the paper. Using secondary data and gathering information through interviews means not every recommendation will apply or be useful at every type of hotel. The size and scope of this paper is not large enough to cover every
segment of the hospitality industry. Rather, the author makes suggestions that operators can implement without affecting guest satisfaction.
Part Two

Literature Review

Introduction

In this section, a variety of academic research, corporate information, case studies, and trends in the sustainability movement within the hospitality industry will be reviewed. Numerous topics will be reviewed. The area of corporate social responsibility (CSR) within the industry will be reviewed, including what measures are being taken, causes and concerns being addressed, justification for CSR investment, and the growing demands of consumers within the marketplace. Guest satisfaction will be discussed secondly, exploring what attributes of a hotel are important to guests and how bathroom toiletries amenities impact overall satisfaction. Green certification programs will be discussed including their impact on the topic. The final area of Part Two will review sustainability trends and initiatives happening currently in order to share and promote those steps to the reader for possible implementation at other hotels.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Growth in industry. In the 1970s, research in the area of corporate social responsibility (CSR) investment found that such investments enhance an organization’s image by building better “brand images” in the eyes of customers and prospective employees, while improving employee retention and strengthening relationships with business partners and government agencies. This became known as social impact theory (Moskowitz, 1972; Parket & Eilbirt, 1975; Soloman & Hansen, 1985; Tsoutsoura, 2004; Turban & Greening, 1997). CSR has grown in importance and significance in the business community around the world, including the hospitality industry. Wahab and Pigram (1997) state that, “Tourism must offer products that are
operated in harmony with the local environment, community attitudes, and cultures, so that these become the permanent beneficiaries and not the ‘victims’ of tourism development” (p. 279).

CSR has become an increasingly important concept in the business world (Lee & Heo, 2009) and a relatively new topic in the hospitality industry (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008) emerging during the last decade (Lee & Heo, 2009). The hospitality industry has focused on addressing environmental issues with the use of technology and energy efficiency (Kalisch, 2002). Hotels have taken a variety of steps to increase their level of commitment to all their stakeholders, not only investors and owners, but also employees, prospective employees, customers, government agencies, other partners (Lee & Heo, 2009), society at large and future generations (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008). A hotel company that can effectively demonstrate and communicate its CSR activities can “create a competitive edge” (p. 471) when recruiting and retaining employees (Holcomb, Upchurch, & Okumus, 2007).

Bohdanowicz & Zientara (2008) make the argument that CSR activities enhance performance and morale of existing employees, increasing retention and recruitment efforts:

To take the argument to its logical conclusion, if an employee genuinely cares about the environment and pays attention to green issues (believing, for instance, that the problem of climate change, as a man-made phenomenon, needs to be effectively tackled), he will be more likely to identify himself with – and, accordingly, to be more committed to – a company that explicitly makes broadly-understood eco-friendliness an integral part of its corporate philosophy. That is why such a company will not only be well-positioned to retain and motivate “green-sensitive” employees, but, critically, to attract and recruit such individuals. And, indeed, more and more university graduates do not want to work for companies that, in their eyes, do not care for the environment (being, for example, big
greenhouse gas emitters) and/or fail to do enough to promote environmental sustainability. It follows that, while recruiting, an organization that embraces CSR-inspired environmentalism – being thereby perceived as an attractive employer – might have an edge over other (less green) companies (p.278).

The hotel industry, whether a property is small, large, or medium in size, impacts the environment and society in several ways, including (1) energy consumption; (2) water consumption; (3) waste production; (4) waste water management; (5) chemical use and atmospheric contamination; (6) purchasing/procurement; and (7) local community initiatives (Kasim, 2006; Kirk, 1995). While much research has investigated the impact and CSR activities of large hotel operators, there is also a need for small and medium-sized hospitality operations to be involved in CSR (Kasim, 2006).

Table 1 presents examples of the CSR programs, initiatives, and activities that the hospitality industry is involved in.
Table 1.

**Corporate Social Responsibility Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Marketplace</th>
<th>Visions &amp; values</th>
<th>Workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charitable donations</td>
<td>Cultural heritage</td>
<td>Ethical advertising</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Welfare</td>
<td>Energy management</td>
<td>Providing a product of value</td>
<td>Clear purpose</td>
<td>Fair and equitable benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate giving</td>
<td>Pollution control</td>
<td>Relationship w/guests</td>
<td>Code of conduct</td>
<td>Career planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations in kind</td>
<td>Recycle</td>
<td>Relationship w/suppliers</td>
<td>Enduring values</td>
<td>Compensation and rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Waste management</td>
<td>Relationship w/shareholders</td>
<td>Ethical behavior</td>
<td>Daycare and family accommodations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>Water conservation</td>
<td>Supplier diversity</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Diversity/equal opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local regeneration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self regulation</td>
<td>Employee assistance program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National welfare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employee communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteerism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Health and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World welfare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Interdependent.** Corporate socially responsible activities are seen by some to work counter to the very purpose of each party’s existence, society and business, but in reality they are interdependent (Porter & Kramer, 2006). An organization that considers CSR activities as part
of its business strategy can have a competitive advantage, finding new business opportunities and
the possibility of developing new innovations (Porter & Kramer, 2006). CSR activities
demonstrate that a business exists not only to make a profit but also to serve and give back to its
community (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008).

Porter and Kramer (2006) refer to the intersections of business and society. As
mentioned, business and society are interdependent. Companies need an educated, upwardly
mobile society to recruit employees from and to find consumers to market to. Businesses can
use their involvement in CSR activities as an opportunity to “create shared value” (Porter &
Kramer, 2006, p.84). A business needs to look at CSR activities in one of three categories:
generic social issues, value chain social impacts, and social dimensions of competitive context
(Porter & Kramer, 2006). Each area adds an increased level of value to the organization and its
activities. When social issues are related to an organization’s goals, the firm can better use its
“resources and capabilities,” thus increasing its impact on society (Porter & Kramer, 2006).
Porter and Kramer (2006) state that organizations need to start thinking about corporate social
integration and not CSR, which will provide the organization with the “greatest competitive
benefit” (p.92).

Firms must have a genuine commitment to CSR. Firms that use CSR involvement as
public relations functions will constantly be dealing with outside pressures, pushing the company
to act in a certain way (Porter & Kramer, 2006). As a result, the credibility and trustworthiness
of the organization will be diminished, a short-term action. Firms must include CSR as criteria
about the intersections of business and society and their interdependence, Bohdanowicz and
Zientara (2008) stated that a genuine commitment to CSR will become a “win-win” (p.288) for
business and society. *Business for Social Responsibility* (“Taking the temperature,” 2006) reports that 67% of business executives strongly agree that CSR activities give their organization a competitive advantage.

**Financial performance.** Numerous studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between a hotel company’s financial performance and its involvement in CSR issues and initiatives (Lee & Heo, 2009, Lee & Park, 2009). CSR also appears to impact the level of customer satisfaction and the value of the firm positively. In turn firms can wisely increase their CSR involvement in order to increase the profitability (short-term) and value (long-term) of their hospitality organization (Lee & Park, 2009). This short-term/long-term concept also plays out in other ways. An organization that is thinking about its long-term financial performance will typically operate with three bottom lines in mind: economic, social, and environmental (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Organizations that are focused primarily on the short-term will act in ways that harm these three bottom lines and participate in behaviors that are “socially detrimental or environmentally wasteful” (Porter & Kramer, 2006, p. 82).

Studies have repeatedly found that there is a positive and simultaneous correlation between CSR and a firm’s performance (Lee & Park, 2009; Salzmann, Ionescu-Somers, & Steger, 2005; Waddock & Graves, 1997). With this positive research and information, hotel managers can confidently continue to increase the CSR initiatives that the firm is involved in as they move forward in their business (Lee & Park, 2009). Lee and Park (2009) also found that the correlation between CSR and financial performance can cause one to improve when the other is enhanced. A firm that is involved in CSR activities will generate more income and resources that will in turn provide resources to continue investing in CSR activities. “In other words, it just pays off (in the longer run) to behave ethically towards employees and to support local
communities as well as to care for the environment and to promote sustainability” (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008, p.275). Table 2 present examples of corporate social responsibility programs for specific hotel companies.

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel Company</th>
<th>CSR Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accor</td>
<td>The Earth Guest program that focuses on fighting child sex tourism and AIDS, preserving the planet’s water, energy resources, supporting local development, reducing the environmental impact of waste, protecting biodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilton</td>
<td>Environmental Reporting requires all hotels to report monthly environmental data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hilton UK and Ireland's Environmental Sustainability Training Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standards for business partners and suppliers to assure these are not involved in child labor, discrimination, and practice ethical, socially responsible employment, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterContinental</td>
<td>Integrate CSR policies into management systems for human rights, diversity, health and safety, environment and community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriott</td>
<td>America's Promise, child care and family services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Consumer demands.** In the early 1990s, findings from a Gallup poll found “that 75% of Americans thought of themselves to be environmentalists” (Osterhus, 1997, p.16). Other research found that markets for green products may represent 20% of consumers (Ottman, 1992; Stisser 1994). Consumers are increasingly becoming more experienced and knowledgeable with and about sustainable practices, and these consumers are demanding changes to how organizations operate (Kasim, 2006). Even with this information at the end of the 1990s, considered the “Decade of the Environment” (p.16), managers were not sure if the cost for CSR...
was justified (Osterhus, 1997). A company cannot be involved in CSR activities and take it as a “guarantee” of success. As a result managers did not feel as though they could justify the expense of CSR activities (Osterhus, 1997).

Some research has suggested that CSR activities do not influence a consumer’s criteria for purchase (Drumwright, 1994), while other research has suggested otherwise. A behavior model by Schwartz (1977) suggests that consumers’ behavior will impact their purchasing criteria and consumption habits. These changes can be influenced by either rewards or penalties (Geller, 1992).

For a CSR message to be accepted by the viewer, there must be trust. The viewer must trust the source of the information and feel as though the message and activity are credible (Osterhus, 1997). An organization must develop CSR messages that are in line with consumer perceptions of the organization (Osterhus, 1997). A company cannot simply claim that a product is environmentally sensitive when it is not. Using outside sources to validate claims can increase the credibility of the claim (Osterhus, 1997).

There are several areas tourism has a negative impact, both environmentally and socially. We can see from the examples of impact listed below the negative impact of solid waste on the environment, which is the area of focus of this paper. Kasim (2006) outlines these impacts as follows:

Environmental:

- Habitats loss to tourism related developments, particularly resort development in pristine areas. Land erosion and water runoff during construction.
- Increased demand on water supply.
- Increased demand on energy supply.
• Increased burden on solid waste management.
• Pollution of water bodies.
• Air pollution from various mode of transport.
• Alteration of the natural environment—ocean floor, mangrove area, beaches.

Social:

• Transition of traditional lifestyle to modernism.
• Value conflict or deterioration of local identity and value system from the meeting of different cultures.
• Loss of traditional economies in favor of tourism related economy.
• Potential displacement of local people in favor of tourism development.
• Loss of authenticity of local arts and crafts to commoditization.
• Standardization of tourist facilities.
• Increased crimes.

• Low-paying jobs. (p. 4)

**Waste Management.** The operation of a hotel generates large amounts of solid waste: by some accounts, as much as 1 kg of waste per guest daily (Bohdanowicz, 2005). The breakdown of this waste is 46% food and non-recyclables, 25% paper, 12% cardboard, 7% plastics, 5% glass, and 5% metals (EMTHIR, 1998 as cited in Kasim, 2006). Almost 50% of this solid waste can be recycled, generating an opportunity to reduce the impact on the environment and potentially create an income stream by selling waste to recyclers (Bohdanowicz, 2005; Kasim, 2006).
There is a large economic impact on providing bathroom amenities. The first is the purchasing of the products to be displayed in guest bathrooms and then used by the guests. The second is the cost of the waste removal and waste management of the small plastic bottles. During the 1980s, research within the hospitality industry focused primarily on energy efficiency (Chan & Lam, 2001). Only since the mid-1990s has municipal waste management garnered any attention (Chan & Lam, 2001). Chan & Lam developed a model that would assist hotel operators with determining their waste output, creating a baseline and a way to measure reduction in waste output. The equation looked at four categories: plastic toiletries, soaps remains, discarded slippers, and newspapers (Chan & Lam, 2001). For the purposes of this paper the equation for plastic toiletries, constituting “shampoo bottles, bath foam bottles, combs, shower caps, toothbrushes, and toothpaste tubes” (Chan & Lam, 2001, p.373), will be examined and applied. The formula, \( E_{\text{plastic}}(\text{waste}) = (A_nD_n)(W_c) \) (Chan & Lam, 2001), is present in Appendix A with information illustrating how much waste is generated in this one area by the leading hotel companies and how this formula can be incorporated for use in a hotel operation in order to determine waste generation baseline and to measure improvements, i.e., reductions in waste in this area.

**Going forward.** McLaren (1998) stated in an article entitled “Rethinking Tourism and Ecotavel” that:

We cannot simply buy into the eco-jargon. What we need is an overview of tourism that acknowledges “green travel” or eco-travel as merely a point of the larger impact of the industry and that there is an urgent need to look at the broad issues related to tourism’s impact on earth (p. 4).
CSR activities including sustainability efforts must be a “collective and conscious effort” of all stakeholders mentioned previously within the hospitality and tourism industries (Kasim, 2006, p.14). White (2005) as quoted by Holcomb, Upchurch, & Okumus (2007), wrote, “CSR is not an opinion; it is a reality” (p.472).

**Guest satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction, or guest satisfaction as it relates to the hospitality industry, is both a function of marketing and a valuable asset used to attract and retain guests (Gundersen & Heide, 1996). Customer and/or guest satisfaction is important to the industry, as it is a criterion for evaluating quality (Pizam & Ellis, 1999), building a positive brand image as well as helping to ensure that guests repurchase, i.e. return to the brand in the future (Berkman & Gilson, 1986), and assisting with word-of-mouth marketing efforts (Peter & Olson, 1987).

The basic purpose of a hotel is to provide the traveler with a clean and comfortable bed, bedroom, and bathroom, the core product (Iacobucci, Grayson, & Ostrom, 1994; Knutson, 1988; McCleary, & Weaver, 1994). When guests, upon checkout, evaluate their satisfaction of the experience at a given hotel, the evaluation is based on experiences of core products and secondary products. Research has shown that the core product offerings must satisfy the guests’ needs before the guests will consider their level of satisfaction with the secondary product offerings. If the core products are not satisfactory, the secondary products will not be enough to make the guest satisfied overall (Iacobucci, Grayson, & Ostrom, 1994). Guests are evaluating a stay at a hotel “on the little things” (Iacobucci, Grayson, & Ostrom, 1994, p. 95).

Lovelock (1985) illustrates the differences between core and secondary product offerings: Airline service provides a good example, with customers first making inquiries and reservations, then checking in their baggage, getting seat assignments, being checked at
the gate, receiving on-board service in flight, and retrieving their baggage at the destination airport. Each of these activities is an operations task that is secondary to the core product of physically transporting passengers and their bags between two airports. But these secondary tasks have a greater potential to generate customer dissatisfaction if performed poorly (p. 272).

**Guest feedback.** In order to know if the lodging facility is satisfying guests, hotels must seek out and receive performance feedback. This feedback comes from a variety of sources, and this information allows the property to ensure a continuity of satisfaction to its guests and make adjustments to service delivery in order to satisfy the guests. Examples of the feedback sources are customer compliments and complaints. While these sources can provide feedback of one singular experience or a guest’s collection of experiences, it demonstrates to hotel operators what is of greatest importance and concern to guests and which evaluated items are “salient” to the experience (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988). Pizam and Ellis (1999) reference this finding from Cadotte and Turgeon (1988) several times, validating how certain information is relevant with the passage of time.

Cadotte and Turgeon (1988) mailed a survey to members of the American Hotel and Motel Association. Some products and services of a hotel generate compliments but have minimal or no impact on complaints. Interestingly, they also found the reverse is also true. A product or service that may be expected will not cause a guest to compliment the property, but if the expectation is not met, a complaint may occur (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988).

The most frequent guest complaints refer to quality of service; price of room, speed of service, availability of parking and accommodations, checkout time, and adequacy of credit
(Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988). Conversely, helpful employees, cleanliness, and quality of service were the top three features generating compliments.

The frequency of complaints and compliments in hotels are shown in Table 3, reported by Cadotte and Turgeon in the Cornell H.R.A. Quarterly (1988).

Table 3.

_Frequent Complaints and Compliments in Hotels_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaints</th>
<th>Compliments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Price of rooms, meals, and other services</td>
<td>1. Helpful attitude of employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Speed of service</td>
<td>2. Cleanliness of establishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Quality of service</td>
<td>3. Neatness of establishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Availability of parking</td>
<td>4. Quality of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Employee knowledge and service</td>
<td>5. Employee knowledge and service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Quietness of surroundings</td>
<td>6. Convenience of location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Availability of accommodations requested</td>
<td>7. Management’s knowledge of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Checkout time</td>
<td>8. Quantity of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Adequacy of credit</td>
<td>10. Quietness of surroundings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While guests complained about these issues if they were not satisfied with them at the hotels, these same issues did not induce compliments if the guests were satisfied. Guests have a level of expectation which, when not met, will be voiced to management and staff through complaints; yet when these expectations are achieved, the guests seldom compliment the property (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988). Guests have a certain level of expectation associated with
a segment of the lodging industry, and when that expectation is not met, the guest will complain. Satisfaction in the hospitality industry has many variables, as guests have “different needs, objectives, and past experiences” that create future expectations (Pizam & Ellis, 1999, p. 328).

Guest satisfaction is impacted in two ways, by both “tangible and intangible aspects” of the experience (Gundersen & Heide, 1996, p.74). The research conducted by Gundersen and Heide (1996) concluded that guest satisfaction was affected by “the tangible aspects of the housekeeping department and the intangible aspects of reception” (p.78). The question is, what are the tangible and intangible aspects that impact guest satisfaction? We must know this to better prepare in order to meet and exceed the guests’ expectations.

Hotels seek guest feedback in a variety of ways, including comment cards, satisfaction surveys, and by logging and tracking guest input, both positive and negative (Gundersen & Heide, 1996). These efforts produce little useful information, as the response rates are low and information is limited or circumstantial, so managers must use this feedback method with knowledge of this fact.

**Guest interactions.** A major factor that impacts guest satisfaction and perception in the lodging industry is the quality of service provided by the employees of a given property. Employees deliver service with some variability due to the human dynamics that are present at every guest-employee interaction. This can result in one guest complaining about an employee while another guest compliments that same employee. This factor is demonstrated in the finding of Cadotte and Turgeon (1988), as quality of service ranks highly in both eliciting complaints and compliments, probably because it is intangible and difficult to control.

As mentioned, some products and services of a hotel property, if not provided or performed to guests’ expectations, can have a negative impact on the guests’ experience, but
when these products and services are achieved, there will be no impact regarding guest satisfaction for the better.

One of the recommendations of the Cadotte and Turgeon (1988) study was that in order to increase guest satisfaction, a property must be as good as the competition, but not try to be superior, especially in areas that can be easily duplicated. Guests are always comparing. They are evaluating what a hotel offers in comparison to the hotel’s competition. The study also recommended that a hotel be as good as its competition on items that dissatisfy guests and far better on the satisfiers and critical factors that satisfy guests, and in turn guests will give the property more compliments and further grow the property’s business.

**Bathroom amenities.** In the 1980s, as corporate social responsibility became an increasingly important concept in the hospitality industry, a new trend emerged within this highly competitive industry: “amenities creep” (Bernstein, 1999, p. 47). This amenities creep pertains to the many items added to a hotel room’s list of amenities provided to guests, including soap, shampoos, and lotions. At some point during this time period, function became luxury, and many items which are unnecessary became the standard and expected by guests, while increasing environmental impact.

In several studies researching guest preferences, hotel bathroom amenities are not mentioned. Guests mention amenities such as hair dryers, irons and ironing boards, room service, and bathrobes (McCleary & Weaver, 1994).

However, other studies have examined what brings guests to a hotel and what causes them to return (Knutson, 1988). Knutson (1988) surveyed guests who stayed in economy, mid-price, and luxury lodging properties and found that leisure travelers reported an average length of stay of four nights while business travelers reported an average of two nights’ stay. Clean,
comfortable, well-maintained rooms; convenient location; prompt and courteous service; safe and secure environment; and friendly and courteous employees were the attributes which more than two-thirds of the surveyed travelers reported as factors that led them to select a particular lodging facility (Knutson, 1988). Room rates, as a consideration for selection of a property, were found not to be “unanimous.” Leisure travelers were more concerned with rates than business travelers, and economy travelers more concerned with room rates than mid-price travelers, and mid-price travelers more concerned than luxury travelers. In the selection criteria for leisure travelers, recreational facilities were considered in addition to meeting and convention space and services for the business travelers (Knutson, 1988).

The above-mentioned selection criteria were used in the travelers’ selection process and were also part of their consideration when deciding to return to a property. The decision to return had one additional criteria, that of the “staff made them feel special.” This important finding shows that loyalty is in some ways created by the hotel’s staff and their interaction with guests. Factors that would cause a guest not to return to a hotel were poorly maintained and/or dirty rooms in the economy and mid-price segments, and while this same reason was found in the luxury segment, price was a bigger factor for guests not returning in the luxury segment.

The survey that Knutson (1988) conducted sought to find out what guests expected and used in a hotel, i.e., which services and amenities were expected and/or used. The results in two areas of interest to this paper regard bars of soap and personal-care items. In the economy segment, 95% of travelers surveyed expected to find a bar of soap in the hotel bathroom and 94% used the bar. The results in the mid-price segment were the same. In the luxury segment, 96% of the guests surveyed expected the items and 95% used them. With regard to the personal-care items, in the economy segment, 13% expected the personal care items, while 68% used them.
Among mid-price travelers surveyed, 61% expected these items and 77% used them. In the luxury segment, 95% of the guests expected the personal care items but only 85% used them.

Guests in economy properties had the lowest expectations overall. Only one in eight economy travelers expected to have personal care items in their rooms, and these guests only expected two or more towels per person. Seven out of 10 economy travelers used the personal care items provided in bathrooms, but only 13% expected any to be provided in the first place. And four out of five economy travelers used the extra towels when provided. The mid-price traveler expected shampoo, personal care items, and extra towels and used them when provided. Luxury travelers expected shampoo, personal care items, and extra towels in their hotel room bathrooms, but they didn’t use all the items provided. Some 80% of luxury travelers expected a shower cap or shoeshine cloth, but Knutson (1988) found that only about 50% were used by luxury travelers.

The Knutson (1988) study’s overall findings are that cleanliness is a major factor. There must be total commitment by all employees to service and noticing issues before the guests bring them to the staff attention. The study advises hotels to provide the extras. They will be used and taken, and if branded, will be a reminder of the hotel. Build loyalty among guests and employees, focus on employee training, and be generous with personal care items, it advises. Four out of five guests use them, but few expect them.

The downfall of fancy toiletry amenities, or anything a hotel offers for this reason, is that once they become expected and “standard,” the luxury appeal and competitive edge is lost (Bernstein, 1999). Hotels must focus on being functional. Certain hotels are doing this by providing expected amenities, but in a more environmentally sensitive fashion.
Green Certifications

**Third-party certification.** As the importance of being green and sustainable has grown, so has the development of certification programs. Examples of certifying programs are the Audubon Green Leaf Eco-Rating Programs, Green Keys, Going Green, Earth Check, Green Seal, Energy Star and US Green Building Council LEED (American Hotel & Lodging Association [AH&LA], 2010b) to name a few. Other Green certifications can be awarded from state agencies as well as hotel companies themselves.

Eleven major hotel companies created the binding International Hotels Environmental Initiative (IHEI) in 1992, which has evolved into International Tourism Partnership, to promote increased environmental practices (Hart, 1993). The origins of the IHEI began with the Intercontinental hotel group when it developed its Environmental Manual, which was adapted for IHEI members’ use. Some of the practices that the IHEI calls for include bathroom toiletries being made with a vegetable base and then packaged in completely recycled materials (Hart, 1993).

The U.S. Green Building and Design LEED certification program is a major trend in building construction today. It impacts the residential and commercial construction industries, including office buildings and hotels. The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a program called Energy Star that certifies buildings and products for energy efficiency (Chipkin, 2009). Some of the certifications are awarded for overall greening efforts, other are awarded for more targeted efforts.

**LEED.** LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Council and was established by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in 1994. The LEED movement began with Robert Watson, a scientist with the Natural Resources Defense
Council. Watson brought together nonprofits, government agencies, architects, developers, engineers, builders, product manufactures, and others to develop and promote a more sustainable way of constructing and using buildings around the world (U.S. Green Building Council, 2009). These groups came together and set the following goals that LEED should strive to accomplish. According to the USGBC website, the goals are as follows: Define "green building" by establishing a common standard of measurement; promote integrated, whole-building design practices; recognize environmental leadership in the building industry; stimulate green competition; raise consumer awareness of green building benefits; transform the building market; attain the highest amount of profit while maintaining the appearance of global concern; enforce mandatory compliance while attaining highest monetary profit (U. S. Green Building Council, 2009). With the goals laid out, the LEED Steering Committee set out to develop a rating system that focuses on sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, and the innovation and design process. These areas each have further initiatives that help increase the sustainability of the building while reducing its impact on the environment (U.S. Green Building Council, 2009).

LEED certification is awarded at one of four levels: Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Hotels are awarded points for each LEED initiative achieved. Total points are out of 100, and a property must earn 40, 50, 60, or 80, respectively, to be awarded a certain level.

There is a growing body of real estate research that justifies the expenses of commercial buildings becoming certified, as consumers are willing to pay a premium for products and services that are certified (Fuerst, 2009). As a building attains higher LEED certification, the costs for achieving that level increase, typically adding between 2% and 10% to overall construction costs (Fuerst, 2009). The benefits for these costs are lower operating costs;
increased productivity; enhanced image for stakeholders including owners and tenants; and lower operating and regulatory risks (Fuerst, 2009). A LEED-certified building may be able to generate rewards such as higher rents/prices, lower holding costs, less risk, and less time on the market, plus the benefits of marketing that can compensate for the risk of the additional building expenses. (Fuerst, 2009).

**Independent certifications.** The Green Hotel Association, an organization that helps properties become greener, certifies properties. In order to be certified, one of the requirements is that a property can provide shampoo and other amenities in refillable dispensers and not in small plastic bottles (Green Hotel, 2010).

Eco-Rooms & Eco Suites certification is awarded to hotels that meet eight criteria. Number 3 on the list is that a property offers toiletry amenities via dispensers or in small, practical bottles. This certification program encourages properties to donate any unused items to homeless shelters or taken home so all the product can be used, reducing waste of product (Eco Rooms, 2010).

Green Key eco-rating program awards hotels one to five Green Keys depending on the percentage of criteria meet. There are 150 areas where a hotel can achieve points to be awarded the keys. In the housekeeping section, Question 13 pertains to bathroom toiletries. If hotels provide amenities to guests via dispensers, they are awarded points to help them earn keys (Green Key, 2010).

Green Seal is another certification program available to hotel operators. It is awarded at three levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold (Green Seal, 2010). As part of the qualifying process for Bronze, a property may use refillable dispensers or provide the smallest practical amount in recyclable containers and donate amenities left behind. Once a property is Bronze Green Seal
certified, it must work to become Silver certified within one year. The other two levels of certification, Silver and Gold, do not have any additional impact on bathroom toiletries (Green Seal, 2010).

Multiple states now administer green lodging programs and award certification to hotels that achieve and maintain requirements. A review of programs, including Arizona, California, and Missouri, reveal requirements and trends. Each program has a variety of initiatives in different area, including administrative offices; housekeeping; waste management; landscaping and maintenance; heat, air conditioning and ventilation (HVAC); guest and staff rooms; pools and spas; water conservation; education; kitchen and food; energy; sense of place; conference and green meetings; and others (Arizona, 2010; Missouri, 2010). A hotel does not need to achieve every single initiative, but rather achieve enough to be certified. All three state programs encourage the use of refillable amenity dispensers in guest rooms, but do not require it.

AH&LA. The American Hotel & Lodging Association, after reviewing all of the certification programs available to hotel operators, decided neither to endorse any of them nor to create its own program. Instead the organization developed 11 minimum guidelines for all hotels with a variety of financial resources to implement (Chipkin, 2009).

1. Form an Environmental Committee that is responsible for developing an Environmental Green Plan for energy, water, and solid waste use.

2. Manage the hotel’s environmental performance by monitoring the electric, gas, water, and waste usage information on a monthly and annual basis.

3. Replace incandescent lamps with compact fluorescent lamps wherever possible.

4. Install digital thermostats in guestrooms and throughout the hotel.
5. Implement a towel and/or linen reuse program.

6. Install 2.5-gallons per minute showerheads or less in all guestroom baths and any employee shower areas.

7. Install 1.6-gallon toilets in all guestrooms.

8. Implement a recycling program—including public spaces—to the full extent available in your municipality; document your efforts.

9. Implement a recycling program for hazardous materials found in fluorescent bulbs, batteries, and lighting ballasts through licensed service providers.


11. All office paper products should have 20% or more post consumer recycled content. (AH&LA, 2010a)

An issue that hotel operations and guests need to be aware of is green washing. Green washing is when a property adjusts its operations in order to appear greener, but in reality the operations are not any greener than previously (Chipkin, 2009). Some of the certifying organizations also allow property to self assess and maintain their own green efforts, which can be a contributing factor to potential green washing.

**Rating Agencies**

**AAA.** Guests expect two attributes when deciding in which hotel to stay: hotel cleanliness and location (Callan, 1996; Knutson, 1988). AAA, formerly the American Automobile Association, is an organization that evaluates and rates lodging establishments for the benefit of its members. AAA considers several factors when evaluating a property: location, how recently the hotel was constructed or renovated, the degree of cleanliness and comfort, how well surroundings are maintained, and price (AAA, 2008). AAA requires at a minimum, in order
to be rated, that a hotel provide its guests with certain items in guest bathrooms including toilet tissue, a bath mat, two bars of soap or equivalent, bath, hand, and face towel, and a drinking glass.

Properties being reviewed by AAA for Diamond rating are evaluated in six areas; cleanliness and condition; management and staff; exterior, ground, and public areas; guestroom décor, ambiance, and amenities; bathrooms; and guest services (AAA, 2008). For the purpose of this paper, each of the Diamond award levels, which range from one to five Diamonds, will be reviewed with focus on bathroom standards in reference to toiletries.

A budget property which provides a traveler with basic essential accommodations that are clean will be awarded a rating of one Diamond. The minimum level of amenities in the guest bathroom for such a property would be two small bars of soap, or equivalent, and facial tissues. In addition, the minimum standards listed in the preceding paragraph would also need to be provided (AAA, 2008).

The rating of two Diamonds means that these hotels “…appeal to the travelers seeking more than basic accommodations. There are modest enhancements to the overall physical attributes, design elements, and amenities of the facility typically at a moderate price (AAA, 2008, p.6).” At a two Diamond award property a guest can expect two medium bars of soap, or equivalent, plus one packet or bottled toiletry item.

Hotels awarded three Diamonds are properties that meet a “comprehensive” list of travelers needs. Three Diamond “properties are multifaceted with a distinguished style, including marked upgrades in the quality of physical attributes, amenities, and level of comfort provided” (AAA, 2008, p.6). At a three Diamond property, guests are to be provided with a four-piece toiletry set in the guest bathroom. This set must include one large bar of soap, one
medium bar of soap or equivalent, and two bottled items, i.e., shampoo, lotion, or conditioner, all nicely presented (AAA, 2008). In addition; toothpaste, brush, comb, sewing kits, and mouthwash need to be available on property for guests with a need for such items.

Four Diamond properties are upscale and stylish. Guests are provided with a high level of service, hospitality, and attention-to-detail, as well as a larger selection of enhanced quality amenities (AAA, 2008). This high level of amenities includes additional toiletries in guest bathrooms. Four Diamond properties provide guests with a seven-piece toiletry set, including two large bars of soap or equivalent, three bottled items plus two additional items, presented in an upscale fashion (AAA, 2008).

The highest award level of AAA Diamond is the five Diamond award. Properties awarded this level provide the “ultimate in luxury and sophistication.” Guest and public areas are to have the highest level of quality and stand out in many areas. Service is flawless and both meets and exceeds the expectations of guests. Everything at a five Diamond property provides an unmatched experience. Properties rated five Diamonds must provide the highest level of amenities in guest bathrooms as well. The bathroom toiletries amenities provided in five Diamond properties are included as part of a ten-piece set. This toiletry set must include designer or spa product in ample size bottles and be “uniquely presented.”

**Forbes.** Forbes Travel Guide, formerly known as the Mobil Travel Guide, reviews and inspects hotels, as AAA does. Upon completion of the rating process, a hotel will be awarded one to five Stars. The process to be awarded Forbes Stars includes a facility inspection and service evaluation (Forbes, 2010). The number of Stars a property is awarded does not correlate directly to the number of Diamonds the same property is awarded.
Properties that have been awarded one Star provide consistently clean and comfortable rooms. The focus of a one Star property is on providing a value experience for travelers. Examples of such properties are Hampton Inn and Fairfield Inns (Forbes, 2010). One Star properties are to provide “hygienic soap and shampoo” in guest bathrooms (Forbes, 2010).

Two Star properties meet the one Star criteria but have additional amenities including a full-service restaurant. These properties also have enhanced décor, amenities, and guest room fixtures. Doubletree Hotels and Courtyard by Marriott are examples of two Star properties (Forbes, 2010). Two Star properties provide guests with “hygienic soap, shampoo and two other bath amenities in guest bathrooms” (Forbes, 2010).

Hotels and resorts which provides a high level of accommodation, service and amenities will be awarded three Forbes Stars. Amenities include meeting space, fitness center, and room service. The hotel should have stylish public areas, tying into the local culture for the guest experience while staying at the hotel. Hyatt, Hilton, and Marriott are examples of three Star properties. A guest can expect the following toiletry items in a guest bathroom at three Star hotels: “hygienic soap, shampoo and four other bath amenities” that are displayed “attractively” (Forbes, 2010).

Four Star properties have design features to set the property apart, while a five Star property is a destination unto itself (Forbes, 2010). To be awarded either four or five Stars, a property must be of the highest quality, provide exceptional service and undergo an additional service evaluation. Examples of four Star properties are Ritz-Carlton and Four Seasons hotels. Examples of five Star properties are the Peninsula Beverly Hills and Mandarin Oriental New York. Guests at four or five Star properties will be provided with and can expect “hygienic soap,
shampoo and five other bath amenities which are exceptionally luxurious in quality and variety” in guest bathrooms (Forbes, 2010).

**Sustainability Trends**

*Environmental sustainability.* Environmentalism, or greening, has become an important trend impacting the hospitality industry over the past few years. While hotels can be “green,” a higher standard of sustainability has become an even more powerful trend. The Dow Jones Sustainability Index website (2005) defines corporate sustainability as follows:

Corporate sustainability is a business approach that creates long-term shareholder value by embracing opportunities and managing risks deriving from economic, environmental, and social developments. Corporate sustainability leaders achieve long-term shareholder value by gearing their strategies and management to harness the market's potential for sustainability products and services while at the same time successfully reducing and avoiding sustainability costs and risks.

In this portion of the paper, a review of what the industry is doing in order to be more environmentally sustainable will be conducted. In order for the lodging industry to reduce its impact on the environment and its operating costs, numerous steps have been taken. Some of these steps have previously been mentioned, such as housekeeping programs, towel reuse programs, and linen exchange programs. Others involve investment in property improvements, such as the heating, cooling, and water systems. Companies are also reevaluating their supply chain and becoming more sustainable while reducing their carbon footprint.

**Sustainability steps in the industry.** Several trends exist in the hotel industry surrounding the hotel guest room. In the following pages, a variety of topics will be discussed regarding the steps that the hospitality industry is taking to become more sustainable. Tax
incentives, utility rebates, and fast return on investment encourage some of these sustainability trends (Clausing, 2010).

Becoming green certified is a major trend within the industry, as discussed earlier. Kimpton Hotel and Restaurants is currently working towards Green Seal certification for all 50 of it properties (Duxbury, 2010). Marriott has an ambitious plan to have 300 LEED-certified properties by 2015 (“Marriott promises,” 2010). One way Marriott will accomplish this goal is through a prototype Courtyard product that will be pre-certified so that if a developer builds that property to specifications, the hotel will be eligible to apply for and earn LEED certification (Stoessel, 2010).

Carlson Companies Inc. recently signed the U.N. Global Compact, becoming one of the first hotel companies to do so. See Appendix B for a copy of the U.N. Global Compact. The compact promoted “sustainable and socially responsible policies in the areas of human rights, labor, the environment, and anti corruption” (Vomhof, 2010).

Hotel companies are also installing new systems to monitor and assist with reducing waste and energy usage. Hilton recently announced that sustainability is now a brand standard. The hotel chain also announced the results of an initial testing of LightStay (De Lollis, 2010; “Hilton environmental,” 2010). LightStay computes the amount of waste and carbon generated and tracks the energy and water usage at the company’s properties. Hilton’s initial results showed a 5% reduction in energy consumption and a 10% reduction in waste output (“Hilton environmental,” 2010). Starwood is testing an energy management system (EMS) that uses sensors to detect when a guest is out of the room or sleeping and adjusts the temperature by 4 to 5 degrees, reducing energy costs with no noticeable impact to guests (De Lollis, 2009).
Environmental trends are occurring in all places, including environmentally sensitive places, such as Yosemite National Park. Delaware North Companies Parks and Resorts, the authorized lodging concessioner, recently revealed its new, sustainable hotel rooms and store. The rooms feature heating and air-conditioning systems that are automatically controlled in order to save energy, building insulation that is made of recycled newspaper, low flush toilets, and organic-cotton bedding (Burgess, 2010).

Several hotels are starting to offer guests the option to opt-out of housekeeping services daily. Guests at some hotels are asked if they would prefer no service, a full cleaning, or a quick service; i.e., fresh towels, trash removal, and vacuuming (Yu, 2010). By not cleaning a room daily, costs to the environment and labor costs are reduced. Less water, chemicals, and energy are used as a result of less frequent housekeeping services. Starwood’s program is called “Make A Green Choice.” Starwood offers guests an incentive of either $5 hotel credit or 500 Starpoints. Other hotels offer up to a $20 nightly discount (Nassauer, 2010).

One emerging trend is decreased newspaper delivery to guest room doors. Marriott and other properties have halted newspaper delivery to guestrooms in the early morning, as they found many guests did not take or read the paper, which resulted in too much waste. Marriott does make a newspaper available at the front desk or elsewhere in the lobby for guests desiring one (“Marriott promises,” 2010).

Governments at all levels, local state and federal, are recognizing that the sustainability of hotels is not a destination but rather an ongoing, evolving process. Government agencies support this process in many ways, such as requiring employees traveling for government business to stay at certified green hotels. This is similar to when the Americans with Disabilities
Act (ADA) regulations were introduced and employees were required to stay at hotels that complied with ADA.

Hotel room keys have become a standard plastic card with a magnetic strip. While these keys are reusable, their production and the fact that they do not last forever and will end up as waste poses another environmental issue. Pineapple Hospitality, a hotel room key manufacturer, is now manufacturing and marketing a green key. This key is environmentally sustainable, as it is made from thermoplastic polymer, corn, or recycled PVC (polyvinyl chloride piping).

Another way for a hotel to operate sustainably is to reduce the amount of waste generated and the impact of that waste on the environment. Recently, Americas Best Value Inns announced that it would transition to biodegradable packaging of toiletries (Watkins, 2010). A typical toiletries bottle takes 450 years to “dissolve” but biodegradable bottles take about nine years (Watkins, 2010). Some of the Americas Best Value Inns will be eliminating bottles altogether and providing toiletries to guests via the shower dispensers, further reducing their environmental impact. It is a new trend in the United States, but in the UK and Europe, 59% of hotels provide soap and shampoo for guests in dispensers (AmEx, 2007).

Additional steps. Some additional steps that have been taken in the industry to move toward sustainability include:

- Painting the roof of the building with a white coating that can deflect heat by 85% while reducing surface temperatures by 50% (Hsu, 2009).
- The Hutton Hotel in Nashville and SpringHill Suites in Atlanta have installed key card readers in guests’ rooms. When a guest inserts the room key, it enables power to the room. The benefit is energy savings when a guest it not occupying the room (Haussman, 2009, Stafford, 2010)
• Greening the roof occurs when a garden is planted on the roof in order to reduce the greenhouse effect (Easton, 2010).

• Using glass pitchers instead of water bottles to reduce or eliminate plastic (Clausing, 2010).

• In order to reduce the amount of paper used and recycled, several hotels are discontinuing placement of phone books in guest rooms. The Bellagio and other MGM Resorts in Las Vegas have worked with phone book publishers to move forward with this initiative (Momentum, 2010).

• Installing solar panels on a hotel's façade to capture the sun’s energy in order to provide power to the hotel such as the Crowne Plaza Copenhagen, in Denmark (“Intercontinental Hotel Group,” 2010).

• Purchase towels and sheets that are Fairtrade certified. Fairtrade is an organization that is working to reduce poverty by bringing producers’ products to market (Butler, 2010).

• Recycling unused or partially used soap with Clean the World, an organization that collects, cleans, and distributes soap throughout the world (De Lollis, 2010). Hotels pay a tax-deductible fee to participate and in the process help to save lives of individuals in Third World countries that would not have access to soap otherwise.

• Some hotels that provide robes and slipper to guests are no longer placing them in the room but rather asking guests to request them. This reduces laundry costs and impact, as typically robes are washed after each guest checks out regardless of whether the guest used the robe or not (Mayock, 2009).

• Other steps that Marriott is taking are:
  o Purchasing room key cards made of 50% recycled plastic.
- Purchasing pillows made from recycled bottles.
- Purchasing toilet paper rolls that do not have the cardboard center ("Marriott promises," 2010).

**Bathroom toiletry marketing.** In the American Hotel & Lodging Association 2008 Lodging Survey (AH&LA, 2008), it was found that 85% of the hoteliers surveyed said their properties provide branded amenity products in guest rooms. Among mid-scale properties without food and beverage service, that number was 91%. This highlights the importance that hotel management and operators place on branded amenities. Properties not affiliated with chains and economy properties had the lowest percentage, 61% and 67%, respectively.

Certain hotel brands are partnering with different brands of personal care companies. The Body Shop has an exclusive line of products for hotels that supports the International Hotel Environmental Initiatives (IHEI) and other environmental efforts. Companies that purchase from the Body Shop (TBS) for their amenity needs are required to sign agreements in support of environmental guidelines that TBS supports. TBS also offers hotels the option to recycle the plastic one-ounce bottles (Hart, 1993).

**Environmental Case Studies.**

The American Hotel & Lodging Association has on its website several eco-friendly case studies from member properties. Some of the steps and efforts taken are examined in the following section.

**Accor’s initiatives.** Accor, a French hotel and travel company, with a large presence in Europe and 4000 hotels in 90 countries, has been working to incorporate solar energy and eco-design into its properties since 1998 (Cortijo, 2003). Solar panels were installed and tested at a few hotels. By March 2001, the company had 14 properties with solar panels. The installation
of panels at these 14 properties was the largest solar operation that any company in France had undertaken. When Accor was bidding to the International Olympic Committee to build two hotels for the 1999 Sydney Olympics, it was its environmental management that assisted the company in winning the bid (Cortijo, 2003). Accor designed the hotels with sustainable building materials, water-saving initiatives, energy savings, renewable energy, waste recovery, and education as points in its environmental management plans.

Accor’s sustainability efforts encompassed a variety of areas. It used creative building materials including low volatile organic compound paint and flooring made of recycled, graded hardwood. In order to reduce water consumption, the company developed a gray water separation process; treatment and reuse of water in toilets, irrigation, fire hydrants, and the sprinkler tank; and collection of rainwater from gutters in the garden water storage tank for recycling. To generate energy savings, Accor designed rooms where the air conditioning automatically switches off if windows are opened; louvers in foyers provide effective and natural air flow and energy savings; external awning fitted to guest rooms reduce radiated heat from direct sunlight; and all guest rooms have black-out curtains to block out light and absorb heat. Accor also installed solar panels on the roof to produce 60% of the hotel’s hot water from renewable sources. Accor even addressed waste recovery and reduction by using worm farms to deal with up to 150 kg of organic fruit and vegetable waste each week, producing fertilizer for the hotel’s herb garden (Cortijo, 2003).

Accor developed the Hotels Environmental Charter for the full deployment of environmental measures in the daily operation of properties. Hotels, whether company-owned or franchised, are allowed to act locally within specific guidelines to reduce their environmental impact. The Charter was developed with an educational component. This allows managers to
share information and train staff so that they understand why actions are taken and the impact of the actions (Cortijo, 2003).

**Radisson’s initiatives.** The Radisson Hotel Cleveland initiated a program called “Sustainability Implementation.” It began the process in August 2007 by learning from peers. Management learned what was happening with greening and sustainability within the industry and then met with other managers of hotels in downtown Cleveland (AH&LA, 2009). Radisson executives explored ways to reduce waste by examining the trash. What they found was that 47% of the waste was packing material, 30% was paper products, 15% was cardboard, and 8% was food and other miscellaneous items. With this baseline, the hotel created a recycling program. Recycling bins were placed in back offices and housekeepers were instructed to recycle items found in hotel rooms, including newspapers.

The program was successful. The hotel was able to recycle 50% of the newspapers that are delivered to guests each morning, which meant that between 600 and 700 newspapers (225 lbs.) and around 168 lbs. of paper from back offices were recycled on a biweekly basis. Recycling of phone books and usage of post-consumer paper also occurred (AH&LA, 2009). The Radisson goals for the future are to be recycling 75% newspapers and 85% of office paper by 2010.

The Radisson also took another step in its drive to be more environmentally friendly. The hotel unplugged the mini-refrigerators in all of its 142 guest rooms. In this study, the hotel found the majority of guests were not using the refrigerators during their stay (AH&LA, 2009). Proper signage was placed to educate guests about this conservation measure and explained that the refrigerator could be used if the guest desired by simply plugging it in. By taking this simple
step, the hotel found it could save up to $3,690.58 per year. The hotel’s goal for 2009 was to save 50% of the total usage, or 17,408.39 KWH, which translates to $1,845.29.

Other steps the hotel has taken are to switch all cleaning products to green seal certified cleaners and install waterless urinals in the men’s restrooms, saving an estimated 15,000-20,000 gallons of water per year (AH&LA, 2009).

**Gaylord’s initiatives.** At the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center, several steps have been taken to make the property greener and more environmentally friendly as it takes the final steps in becoming the first hotel in the Kissimmee resort corridor to become a member of the Florida Green Lodging Program (AH&LA, 2009). Examples include changing guest room light fixtures to energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs, and installing an in-room “comfort management” system that can reduce the energy consumed in a guest room by one-third by monitoring and adjusting room temperatures through room sensors (AH&LA, 2009). The hotels have also established a recycling program to reduce cardboard waste; reduced water consumption by installing low-flow faucets and toilets; and are working with local and organic farmers to reduce the distance that food items travel to get to the table (AH&LA, 2009). The hotel’s meeting planners have also taken a proactive role in the greening programs by working to reduce the amount of waste that meetings generate and by going paperless, electronically storing files and presenting clients with invoices on CDs instead of paper (AH&LA, 2009).

**Kimpton’s initiatives.** Kimpton Hotels and Resorts created a program called Earthcare that uses environmentally sensitive products and service. The program involved employees at all levels and encouraged ideas from staff for implementation (AH&LA, 2009). The Earthcare program has several components: the use of nontoxic cleaning products; recycling both in the back of the house and the front of the house to include guest rooms; water conservation through
low-flow faucets and such; and the use of organic food products (AH&LA, 2009). Examples of the impact are the reduction of 48,596 gallons of toxic substances not entering the water supply from cleaning products; 117 tons of cardboard recycled; 50 million gallons of water saved via the low-flow faucets; and even the recycling of 52,000 coat hangers, saving 1.8 tons of metal and steel (AH&LA, 2009).

**Fairmont’s initiatives.** Other hotels have taken bold steps in the sustainability and greening arena. The Fairmont Miramar, Santa Monica, CA, has a goal of zero waste. Working with a new waste management company, the hotel is working towards a goal of recycling 100% of its waste. The property has also started to conserve water. For example, power washing the front driveway has been stopped, saving 274,000 gallons of water (AH&LA, 2009).

**Marriott’s initiatives.** While these case studies have looked at individual properties, each small part added together becomes part of a much larger effort. For a large hotel company, such as Marriott, the impact can be great and far reaching. Marriott has moved from focusing on short-term savings to long-term conservation (AH&LA, 2009). Through Marriott’s several sustainability programs, the company has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 70,000 tons; replaced 450,000 incandescent light bulbs with energy-saving fluorescent lighting; switched to an “ozone activated laundry” and other laundry systems; replaced 4500 outdoor signs with LED and fiber optic technology; and installed 400,000 shower heads that reduce hot water usage by 10% (AH&LA, 2009). The company is working to further reduce water consumption 25% by 2019 (Gunther, 2009). Marriott is also in the beginning stages of changing plastic room keys into room keys made of 50% recycled material. Part of Marriott’s greening and sustainability efforts involve the guest beyond the hotel property; thus highlighting the issue to more people. Guests can purchase carbon offsets and see their money be donated to the Juma reserve in
Amazonas, Brazil (Gunther, 2009). Marriott has pledge $2 million to that conservation organization.

**Energy saving initiatives.** While the hospitality industry has embraced compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), a new technology is emerging that resolved some of the negative aspects of CFLs, such as their mercury content and requirements for proper disposal of CFLs (Vishnevsky, 2009). The new technology is LED and, while cost is the typical prohibition from them being installed at hotels, pricing within the next 12 months will put them within reasonable reach of hotel operators (Vishnevsky, 2009). New products coming into the marketplace that will reduce lighting and energy consumption are types of lighting control systems. These systems control all of the lights in a room and allow the guest to have complete control over the lights, not just in the off-on positions, but in a range of dimmed settings. A dimmed light can conserve a proportional amount of energy; therefore lights with a dimming feature assist with a property’s conservation efforts. According to the EPA, hospitality facilities expend the most electricity on lighting.

**Water saving initiatives.** Another way to operate more sustainably is to save water by recycling it (Vermillion, 2009). A water system can save resources, energy, and money. The laundry area of a hotel can be a large contributor to water waste. But new systems on the market can be installed to take wastewater from one load of laundry so it can be sanitized and used for the next load, thereby reducing energy, water, and sewage costs. The savings is in the fact that “about 75% of laundry loads require hot or warm water. We can cut the energy used to heat the water by 50.”(Vermillion, 2009, p.34)

**Waste reduction initiatives.** Hotels are taking a second look at the amount of waste that is generated by plastic bottles typically found in hotel guest bathrooms. Some hotels in Canada,
for example, are no longer providing individual soaps and shampoos and are instead replacing them with dispensers. Trout Point Lodge in Canada has implemented a variety of sustainability efforts into both the design and operations, including natural ventilation, no air conditioning in rooms, bulk soap dispensers in guest bathrooms, and use of locally grown organic fruits and vegetables. Guest surveys show that 60% to 80% of this 12-unit resort’s customers chose to come based on environmental considerations (Tossell, 2009).

A study in Australia asked hoteliers if they provided toiletries to their guests (Buckley & Araujo, 1996). Of the hotels surveyed, 70% reported providing toiletries to guests. Of them 6% used refillable items to provide the amenities; 43% threw out the toiletries when the guests’ stays were completed; 5% gave unused toiletries to charity; and 15% gave them to employees (Buckley & Araujo, 1996).

**Alternatives to traditional toiletries.** While hotels are exploring innovative new sustainable ways to provide hotel bathroom toiletries, the traditional way of providing such items to guests is by using plastic bottles. Last year, approximately 1 million of these little plastic bottles were provided to guests by hotels in the United States (AH&LA, 2010c). In the American Hotel & Lodging Association 2008 Lodging Survey (AH&LA, 2008), the percentage of hotels with liquid soap dispenser in bathrooms increased from 6% in 2004 and 2006 to 22% in 2008. A hotel that considers a refillable dispenser system in bathrooms, such as the one recently implemented at the Comfort Inn & Suites, Boston at Logan Airport, can not only save costs, but also can reduce the amount of waste generated and possibly provide the guest with a higher quality product (AH&LA, 2010c; McNeill, 2010). Installing refillable dispensers in guest bathrooms can provide the following benefits:
• Bulk liquids are less expensive to purchase than products in individual containers, and higher quality products can be provided to guests.

• No costs are associated with guests taking home the products or having to dispose of half-empty bottles. The hotel pays only for the product that is used.

• Individual packaging costs are eliminated and waste associated with individual bottles is reduced.

• There is also the potential to achieve housekeeping efficiencies. Housekeeping doesn’t have to replace the amenity bottles after each guest vacates or look for caps that may have fallen to the floor. It’s been demonstrated that dispensers only need to be serviced on a weekly basis.

• Another available option uses dispensers that are retrofitted with a disposable and recyclable cartridge. Since these cartridges contain the approved product, they avoid any unapproved liquids being introduced into the dispenser. In addition to having the same cost savings benefit, this option introduces a higher level of quality control (AH&LA, 2010c).

The following business case example was presented by the AH&LA. A 300-room hotel believes that it may have a potential opportunity to lower amenity costs, reduce waste associated with plastic bottles and the amenity product itself, and achieve some housekeeping efficiencies. However, executives want to calculate their return on investment before taking any action. Each guest room will need two dispensers – one for the shower area and the other for the sink. The cost of two amenity dispensers for each room is $32. The cost to install both dispensers is $8, requiring 30 minutes of labor. The amenity product, labor and waste savings costs are calculated from several national surveys at $.16 daily per room.
Table 4.

*Calculation of savings from dispensers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guest Rooms</th>
<th>Occupancy</th>
<th>Product, Labor, Water Saved</th>
<th>Total Days</th>
<th>Total Saved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>60% $.16 x</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>$10,512</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 5.

*Investment calculation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dispenser cost per room including labor $40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of rooms 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment $12,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.

*Payback of Investment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payback</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Savings</td>
<td>$10,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payback</td>
<td>1.1 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Upon reviewing the case presented, an investment of $12,000 can be paid back in 1.1 years with the annual savings of $10,512. That is a significant return on investment, illustrating the cost savings of providing amenities via dispensers.

**Starwood Interviews**

In the last few years, Starwood Hotel and Resorts has launched two new hotel products, aloft and Element. Aloft is a spinoff of the contemporary and hip W Hotel brand, and Element is an all-suite spinoff of the luxury Westin Hotel brand. According to J.D. Power, aloft is categorized as an upscale property. Others in this category include Hilton, Marriott, and Hyatt (J.D. Power, 2010). These two brands are doing things differently than their competitors in many areas, including food and beverage, hotel operations, and meetings. One of the brand values of these two hotels is to reduce their environmental impact and seek ways to be more sustainable, in both development and operation of the property (personal communication with David Smith of Element, March 9, 2010, & Criste Slim of aloft, June 26, 2010).
Some of what aloft does to reduce its environmental impact is typical of other hotels that seek the same reduction in impact: fluorescent energy-saving bulbs, and recycling of plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and glass, for example. But there are many things that aloft does that stand out. A few of these items are efficient shower heads and toilets that use less water per flush, both methods of reducing water usage and thereby saving an estimated 1 million gallons per year; recycled tires as entry carpet; wood floors made from recycled wood; dimming or automatic lighting in public areas; eco-friendly chemicals for cleaning; and saline pools to reduce the amount of chlorine that goes down the drain. Of specific interest is aloft’s and Element’s use of product dispensers in the showers for guests’ use. There are two dispensers that contain shampoo and body wash set nicely with the soap tray (personal communication with David Smith of Element, March 9, 2010, & Criste Slim of aloft, June 26, 2010).

Conclusion

This literature review has explored and presented the relevant topics relating to the investigation of sustainable environmental practices and consumer attitudes and behaviors toward hotel bathroom amenities. Corporate social responsibility programs are becoming increasing commonplace and important for a variety of reasons. Further topics investigated within the literature review include sustainable environmental practices currently utilized in the hospitality industry and how consumer attitudes; rating agency regulations such as those of AAA and Forbes; and certification programs impact a hotel implementing an amenity dispenser program. Guests have also come to expect and use the toiletries provided by hotels in bathroom.
Part Three

Introduction

This paper has thus far presented the purpose, statement of problem, objectives, and justification in Part One. Part Two reviewed the scholarly literature and ascertained the prominent themes essential to this paper. The final section presents three interviews, two face-to-face on one via email, of hoteliers that manage properties that have implemented an amenities dispenser program. Upon review of these interviews, managerial suggestions will be presented for the implementation of recommendations that will assist hotels in their endeavors to become more environmentally sustainable. Suggestions for future research in order to increase the knowledge in the area of topics discussed will also be presented.

Discussion

The first purpose of this paper was to examine the corporate social responsibility steps that have occurred in the hospitality industry. The hospitality industry has taken many steps to increased its CSR commitment, involving all stakeholders, including investors, owners, current and potential employees, guests, government agencies, and other partners. CSR gives hospitality firms a competitive advantage in terms of both marketing efforts and financial performance, including the hotels’ three bottom-lines: economic, social, and environmental.

As consumers continue to become more aware of sustainability practices, they are demanding that organizations operate differently and show or explain how these changes in operations benefit the environment. The literature that was reviewed presented how hotels impact society and the environment in part through the amount of waste produced from a variety of sources including bathroom toiletries.
Of course the information that is being provided to the guests must be from a trustworthy source for guests to believe that the information is accurate. This has led to the growth of third-party green certification organizations. In Part Two, literature was reviewed that explored the impact of third-party certification programs and rating agency standards concerning environmental issues on hotel operations. Many certifying agencies award additional credit or points to a hotel that has implemented a dispenser program in guest bathrooms as this effort reduces waste of plastics bottles and the amenities provided in such bottles. AAA and Forbes have guidelines that within certain criteria, implementation of an amenities dispenser program will not impact the level of Diamonds or Stars awarded.

Rating agencies such as AAA and Forbes also have an impact on the way a hotel offers and presents bathroom toiletries. The review of the AAA guidelines demonstrates AAA openness to alternative ways of providing toiletries. At one-Diamond properties, soap is required but can be provided in bar form or as stated in the guidelines, in equivalent form. This equivalent form could be a dispenser. At two- through five-Diamond properties, one or more bottled or packaged toiletries is required. In order for a hotel to implement an amenity dispenser program, AAA must clarify and possibly adjust its guidelines to present all amenities in a dispenser. At this point, hotels that do have a dispenser program provide a bottled amenity in order to maintain their AAA rating. For a property to be awarded one or two Forbes Stars, the guidelines do not state how the amenities need to be provided but simply that they are provided. This allows a hotel to have the flexibility to present amenities as they see fit. Three-Star properties must present amenities attractively and thoughtfully, while four- and five-Star hotels must present a wide variety of amenities. This language creates subjectivity that is open to
interpretation of the inspector. Forbes needs to review its guidelines and become more specific as to how toiletries are to be provided.

AAA on page 40 of its guidelines states that it supports sustainability efforts that are meaningful and have no impact on guest comfort. These requirements demonstrate the impact of AAA and Forbes on the research topic and illustrate another purpose for this paper, which is to support the possibility of AAA and Forbes adjusting their guidelines to encourage a hotel’s effort to operate more sustainably.

In reviewing the literature, staff interactions and cleanliness of the hotel were rated as two of the most important factors to guest satisfaction. A clean and comfortable bed, room and bathroom are the core products. Bathroom toiletries are secondary products. Guests must be satisfied with the core product before the secondary products are evaluated. If the guests are satisfied with the core product, then the secondary products have a greater influence on guest satisfaction. Toiletries will not help to influence the guests’ satisfaction if the basics—a clean room, bed and bathroom—are not provided.

Guest expectations and usage of toiletries were researched and that information was presented in the literature review. While the level of expectation varies depending on the traveler’s market segment, the most guests expect and use some of the toiletries presented by hotels.

**Methodology**

As the research material was reviewed, a few hotels were discovered to be using dispensers in the guest bathrooms instead of small toiletry bottles. Element and aloft hotels, two newly developed brands of Starwood, appear to be the only chains incorporating them as a design element and a sustainability practice. Currently there is only one Element and one aloft in
the California-Nevada area. The author chose to tour these two properties personally and speak with the management of these properties due to their proximity to the author.

During the time with the management at the respective properties, a series of questions were asked of each manager. In order to learn more about how these dispensers impact hotel operations and guest satisfaction, the author toured an aloft hotel in Southern California and an Element in Southern Nevada. Both properties are new within the past two years. The General Manager of the Element, David Smith, and the Directors of Operations at the aloft, Criste Slim, gave the property tours and answered a few questions (personal communication, March 9, 2010, & June 26, 2010). They explained that there are two dispensers that contain shampoo and body wash set nicely with the soap tray.

Figure 1 *Soap dispensers at aloft.*

As this paper is an investigation of sustainable environmental practices and consumer attitudes and behaviors toward hotel bathroom amenities, the first question was about guest reaction to the dispensers. Research presented in Part Two by Cadotte & Turgeon (1988) and Knutson (1988) studied guest expectations and found that guests expect toiletries. As businesses strive to be more sustainable, they must work to ensure that guest satisfaction is not impacted negatively and that the brand and the experience remain intact. Getting guest reactions from...
both properties was extremely important to understand if alternative ways of providing bathroom amenities would be accepted by guests.

The author asked the managers how the staff would respond if a guest refused to use the dispenser and whether the properties have small toiletries to provide to these guests. This question was to see what each property’s commitment to their environmental practices was like. Guests may have different expectations, but how would these hotels handle that situation? Would they just revert to old ways and ideas, i.e., small plastics toiletry bottles?

The next concern was that of security. The managers were asked how they ensured that the dispensers were kept secure so that some guests would not be able to put other liquids into the dispenser and possibly contaminate the product supplied by the hotel. It is important for guests to feel that the dispenser is holding a clean and sterile product just the same as the small toiletry bottles that guests are accustomed to being provided by hotels. The basic, core product a hotel offers is a clean bed, bedroom, and bathroom. This includes fixtures in the bathroom like a dispenser. Therefore dispensers must be clean in order for guests to be satisfied with the core product offering.

With every change, there can be a potential impact on the operations. When using dispensers instead of bottles, there is an impact on the housekeeping department in terms of supplies and how rooms are prepared. The managers were asked about these impacts so that other hotels considering the same sustainable steps as Element and aloft would know what to expect.

The final question during the property visits touched on the two reasons for hotels to switch to dispensers: a reduction in the amount of waste, as supported by research from Chan &
Lam (2001), generated by the hotel and the money saved from not needing to purchase toiletries in small plastics bottles. A list of questions asked of hotel managers is presented in Appendix C.

Results

The first question asked was what guest reaction has been to the dispensers. Both managers reported no negative comments. At the aloft, guests said they “love” the product and the dispensers. The brand of the shampoo and body wash is Bliss, a leading spa company.

Question Number 2 was what if a guest refuses to use the shower dispensers? Both managers stated that there were no bottled amenities at the hotel for guests. The aloft has a small sundry shop at the front desk, and shampoo and body wash are available for purchase if a guest wants a personal product. But both managers also noted that they have not had an issue in this area. This question then leads to the next area of concern, security. Dispensers are secured and accessible only by a housekeeper with a key. The dispensers in the showers are locked and not accessible to guests. As a result there is no tampering with or possibility of contamination of the product in the dispensers.

When housekeeping personnel clean and prepare a guest room, they set out a bar of soap and one bottled item, such as lotion. Some amenities are required for a property to be awarded a specific level of Diamonds or Stars. See the Rating Agencies section of this paper for more information on this topic. Mr. Smith at the Element said that presenting the toiletries via dispensers “balances out” in the long run and does not increase the workload of the housekeepers. Some days they may have to fill the dispensers, causing them to be in a room a little longer than normal, but on other days, when they don’t need to refill, they are out of the rooms a little bit sooner. Ms Slim stated that it was easy for housekeepers, as they now only carry two 2-gallon bottles as opposed to hundreds of little bottles.
Mr. Smith at the Element hotel estimates that the shower dispensers save about 27,000 bottles per year from going into landfills and bring a savings of $15,000 to the hotel annually.

In an email interview with Barry Herman of The Westin Bayshore, Vancouver, he said the hotel has also made efforts to eliminate the plastics bottles in guest rooms. The hotel converted 75 of its 517 guest rooms into environmental rooms (personal communication via email with Barry Herman, December 8, 2009). One of the features of the environmental room was removal of plastics toiletries bottles and the installation of “pump dispensers for soap, shampoo, and lotion” (personal communication via email with Barry Herman, December 8, 2009). The hotel discontinued this program in 1995 and is now testing the pump dispenser option again on two of the guest room floors. A survey was left in the room for feedback from guests, who at the time of print were showing “wide support.” Results from this second survey have been “mostly inconclusive, but overall the guests’ reactions were positive with the change in product,” according to Herman, who is Director of Six Sigma at the Westin. Herman also noted that “at times we are considering a few variables in our decision to use dispensers over bottles, some are Westin brand related, some are environmentally related and other times, cost related” (personal communication via email with Barry Herman, December 8, 2009).

The objective of this paper is to discuss how the elimination of hotel bathroom toiletries might affect the hospitality industry as it works to reduce its impact on the environment and to explore consumer expectations and evaluate sustainable consumer behavior relating to bathroom toiletries. This effect could be measured in a variety of ways, from waste reduction to cost savings, as well as the benefits an organization receives when it becomes more environmentally aware.
Are guests willing to accept this change? From the information provided by the three Starwood hotels that have implemented dispenser programs, guests appear to be viewing the new approach to providing toiletries positively. While guests appear to be accepting of the change from bottles to dispensers and viewing it positively, there is no available research to support eliminating toiletries in guest bathroom in total. Not providing in entirety what the guests have come to expect could possibly have a negative impact on guest satisfaction.

**Recommendations for Implementation**

Based on the information presented in this paper, it is the recommendation of the author that hotels implement a dispenser program for guests. These programs can be set up easily with some coordination on behalf of the engineering and housekeeping departments, as well as outside vendors that supply the dispenser and toiletry products.

For those properties that wish to implement such programs, the first step is to review AAA and Forbes guidelines relating to your hotel’s Diamond or Star level. Properties should work within the confines of their guidelines when implementing a dispenser program so as not to lose a Diamond or Star. Also, keep brand standards in mind. If award levels or brand standards are going to be possibly impacted, the property could install the dispensers in addition to the traditional bottled amenities and place signage in the bathroom explaining guests’ options and how, by using the dispenser, they are helping the environment.

The second step would be to have a meeting with the departments involved. The goal of this effort would be to explain the program to the different departments that will be impacted by the change and enlist their participation.

There are several vendors that offer toiletries amenities. Dispenser Amenities, Room 360, Room Service Amenities, and Trade Key sell dispensers for hotel guest bathrooms. They
can provide an evaluation and pricing for a particular property. The purchasing and installation will be the largest cost of implementation, but it is only a one-time cost.

Communication is also a very important part of the implementation process. Employees and guests must be educated and informed as to the procedures and benefits of this program. Feedback must be actively solicited from both guests and employees so concerns can be addressed. Hotels currently place signage in bathrooms explaining housekeeping procedures as well as the steps the hotel is taking to reduce its impact on the environment. Additional signage can be installed that explains why the dispenser program was implemented. At some hotels, cards are provided that allow that guest to communicate directly with housekeeping as to what items need to be replaced and what items do not. Housekeeping needs to be trained to follow through on guest requests.

The implementation plan should also have a plan for dealing with remaining amenities that are not completely used. These amenities may be provided in order to maintain a hotel’s award level. Bottles should be recycled or if product remains, then donated to homeless shelters. Remaining bars of soap can be donated to Clean the World. Clean the World will sterilize the soaps and then send them to Third World countries so that the remaining soap can be utilized and not wasted. There is a tax-deductible charge for this service. If all the steps are implemented, a hotel will retain its award level, reduce its operating costs, reduce waste output and gain goodwill through all actions taken.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The research presented in this paper presents a variety of topics for future research. The Knutson (1988) study, the only retrievable academic survey on the topic of guest expectations of and usage of toiletries, could be completely re-examined and replicated in order to see if the
outcome may have changed as consumers’ tastes have changed over the past 22 years. Other research could explore how guests interact with hotel bathroom amenities, researching guests’ level of expectation and usage, including how often and for what reason guests take home toiletries from hotel rooms.

Limitations

There are several limitations that must be considered in this paper. Much of the data and research reviewed and explored was from secondary sources. Two of the hotel brands presented, Element and aloft, are new brands in the marketplace. The newness of the brands allow for the hotels to manage expectations better as guests have no prior interaction with services and amenities provided at an Element or aloft hotel.

Another limitation is the generalizability of the paper. Using secondary data and gathering information through interviews means not every recommendation will apply or be useful at every type of hotel. The size and scope of this paper are not large enough to cover every segment of the hospitality industry. Rather, the author makes suggestions that operators can implement without affecting guest satisfaction.

Conclusions

This paper has reviewed many areas of sustainability relating to the hospitality industry. Hotels have taken an active role in the CSR movement, and the level of CSR will continue to increase going forward. Third-party certifications are becoming important for their economic benefits to the hotel operators, as marketing devices to drive guests to a hotel and to demonstrate to the world that a hotel is being green and allowing guests to travel with less of an impact on the environment. Hotels have taken a variety of steps to be green, ranging from the standard to the creative. Yet with all these efforts to become more sustainable, customers’ expectations need to
be met and surpassed, and customer service must be maintained. The findings support that the implementation of a dispenser program into guest bathrooms will benefit a hotel by furthering its CSR efforts while maintaining guest satisfaction.
Appendix A

Waste Generation Formula

The formula, \( E_{\text{plastic waste}} = (A_nD_n)(W\cdot C) \), presented by Chan & Lam (2001), can be used for creating a baseline of waste generated and then used as a tool to measure improvements going forward. This first explanation illustrates the toiletry waste generated by the leading hotel companies in the world.

“\( A_n \)” represents the number of rooms occupied annually. “\( D_n \)” represents the double occupancy ratio in a given year. A ratio of 75% is assumed for this illustration. “\( W \)” is the equivalent of the weight of plastic toiletries that are placed in each room. Chan & Lam (2001) in their research calculated a mean weight of 0.742 kilograms. “\( C \)” is a discounting factor for actual consumption. Based on interviews with housekeepers, Chan & Lam (2001) were able to determine that only about 65% of the toiletries placed in hotel bathrooms are actually consumed. This figure is lower than reported by Knutson (1988), but it provides more representative numbers for illustration purposes.

In order to determine the number of hotel rooms occupied annually, a few steps need to be taken. The top six hotel companies in the world operate 2,847,462 rooms (IBISWorld, 2009). This represents 21.7% of the hotel rooms in the world. With occupancy levels anticipated to be at 65% (IBISWorld, 2010) the number of occupied rooms can be calculated.

\[
2,847,462 \times 365 (\text{number of nights per year}) \times 65\% = 675,560,360 \text{ (rooms occupied yearly among top six hotel companies)} \times 0.75 \text{ (occupancy factor)} = 506,670,270 \text{ occupied room nights per year for the six hotel companies.}
\]

The second part of the equation is to calculate \( W \) by \( C \). \((0.742 \times 0.65) = 0.482\).
Finally, taking the two calculations to arrive at \( E \), \( 506,670,270 \times 0.482 = 244,215,070 \) kilograms. One kilogram is equal to 2.066 pounds. \( 244,215,070 \) KG is equal to \( 504,548,334 \) pounds or \( 252,274 \) tons. This represents \( 21.7\% \) of the plastic waste generated from hotel toiletries throughout the world. Total savings worldwide could be almost five times that.

Table 7.

Leading hotels room count and market share

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel Company</th>
<th># of Rooms</th>
<th>Market Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hilton</td>
<td>475,000</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriott</td>
<td>560,681</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyndham</td>
<td>551,500</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starwood</td>
<td>292,000</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accor</td>
<td>441,281</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercontinental</td>
<td>527,000</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,847,462</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from “Hotels & Motels in the US.” IBISWorld, Copyright 2009 by IBISWorld.

For individual properties interested in doing the calculations for themselves: Begin by gathering the following numbers to develop a baseline at your property for toiletries waste reduction. Determine the number of rooms that your hotel is occupied nightly, which is “An.” Then determine your double occupancy ratio. If that number can’t be generated, assume 75%; Again, “\( W \)” is the equivalent of the weight of plastic toiletries that are placed in each room. Either weigh the amenities provided in your guest bathrooms or use the weight calculated by Chan & Lam (2001) of 0.742 kilograms. “\( C \)” is a discounting factor for actual consumption. Determine your properties’ usage by speaking with housekeepers.

\[
E (\text{plastic waste}) = (AnDn)(W \times C \times \text{discounting factor})
\]
An (number of nights per year) x Dn (double occupancy level) = (occupied room nights per year) for your property. The second part of the equation is to calculate W by C. (weight of amenities X actual consumption) = waste generated per room.

Finally, take the two answers and multiple them together to compute E, the amount of waste generated at your property. Multiple E by 2.066 to convert from kilograms to pounds.
Appendix B

The U.N. Global Compact's Ten Principles

The Ten Principles, in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption, enjoy universal consensus and are derived from:

• The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
• The International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
• The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
• The United Nations Convention Against Corruption

The UN Global Compact asks companies to embrace, support and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption:

Human Rights

• Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
• Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Labour

• Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
• Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
• Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and
• Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
Environment

- Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Anti-Corruption

- Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Note. Adapted from “UN Global Compact – Ten Principles.”
http://www.unglobalcompact.org/aboutthegc/thetenprinciples/index.html
Appendix C

Interview Questions

Five questions were presented to the interviewees during face-to-face interviews.

1. What is guest reaction to your toiletry dispenser program?

2. What is staff response to guests that may request the traditional, small, plastic bottles?

3. How are security concerns addressed? How is the product kept free from possible contamination?

4. What are the impacts to your housekeeping operation with this switch?

5. Do you have any numbers that substantiate this program’s success, such as waste reduced and costs savings?
References


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