

IMPACT

"Green" Hotels Association®





Hello and welcome to “Green” Hotel Association®’s exciting new publication, *IMPACT!* We’re tickled green to present information to you on our amazing successes, our fabulous hotel Members, and our stunning vendors’ products and services. We look forward to a stream of information in this and future editions that will encourage and support further positive impact on the greening of the hospitality industry.

This all began 16 years ago when GHA introduced our first towel card via a mailer to 220 Houston hoteliers. The very first day that anyone could have received the sample card, we received an order from a Best Western general manager. It was a major thrill and clear to me – and to thousands of hoteliers since – that asking guests to reuse towels made sense. It is still the absolute best way to begin a green program at any hotel. Soon a friend said, “If you have a towel card, you’ve got to have a sheet card.” My friend’s comment led to our next incredibly successful offering, the daily sheet card. We’ve since added a “between guests” sheet card, and either card is the next best way to get hotel guests involved in your green program. GHA went on to produce a small Catalog of Environment Products, which includes such items as showerheads, aerators, recycling baskets, books, etc. In 1995, we began Charter Membership, inviting the first 100 Member hoteliers to claim that esteemed position. Our very first Charter Member, Bucuti Beach Hotel in Aruba, continues 16 years later because of Ewald Biemans, Managing Director, to proudly value our relationship.

Media attention has always been spectacular for GHA: Editors and writers have always loved what we do and what we represent, and have always been exceptionally good to us. We are, of course, very grateful. The attention we’ve received in print, on the Web, radio, and TV has always lifted all of our Members and brought more guests and clients to the doors of our member hotels and vendors. As you know, greening has almost exploded in the media in the last 2 to 3 years, which has meant profound attention for GHA and its members.

Almost every day we hear from vendors offering new green products and services. I’ve always said, “None of us can be green without the vendors offering their green products and services. They’re a critical part of this circle.” It’s very important that we read their ads and Web sites, listen to their pitches and choose to purchase from those that help our green programs shine.

Encouraging hoteliers on the green path was sluggish in the beginning, but today every hotelier is aware of greening. The extent to which each hotelier takes their green program is really determined by guests and clients. If they press hoteliers with kind comments, notes and e-mails regarding greening, hoteliers respond. We at GHA have always felt that green hoteliers deserve all the business. We know that’s not the case now, but it’s certainly a very important way to see more guests arrive to patronize your green guest rooms and meeting facilities.

Greening hospitality programs are always very exciting. Green programs create camaraderie among staff because management is listening. Management loves the results of greening because use of resources, utilities and costs are being reduced. Guests adore green programs because their participation means our favorite destinations all over this world are being cared for and protected.

Greening is an incredibly positive process. Greening means saving money while living a healthier life and feeling good because we’re helping protect this beautiful planet! Let’s continue working together to impact the greening of the hospitality world. Make your next green step one of suggesting to a colleague that their property get on the environmental bandwagon by joining “Green” Hotels Association® TODAY! A membership application can be found at on Page 69 and at greenhotels.com/membership.php.

I wish blessings on each and every one of you every day as we take steps together to green our lives in every way possible.

– Thinking “green,” Patty Griffin,
President and Founder, “Green” Hotels Association®



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"Green" Hotels Association®

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TAKING A STAND FOR **SUSTAINABILITY**

"Green" Hotels Association® is the hospitality industry's comprehensive source for environmental consciousness

BY TARA N. WILFONG

In today's overly consumptive society, where bigger often is seen as better and more is coveted over less, many consumers are starting to view the world through green-tinted glasses. In fact, this green revolution, which at one time conjured images of fanatical tree huggers willing to risk life and limb to save the planet, has evolved into a global phenomenon in which eco-conscious consumers are doing their part to minimize their impact on the Earth.

Programs such as recycling and water and energy conservation are readily adopted and efforts to reduce carbon emissions are quickly gaining public notice.

"The GHA has had a tremendous effect on getting the word out to green properties and helping them to realize that they can offer their guests a higher quality experience."

— Emma Mann, EO Marketing Director

Mark Stanland, vice president of marketing for Green Seal™-certified Wausau Paper agreed, adding that the GHA's influence has been instrumental in raising awareness within the lodging industry for this Ally Member's 100-percent recycled paper towels, tissue, and toilet seat covers.

"We try to keep new and innovative product solutions in the marketplace for our clients," Stanland said. "The more truly green products that we have in the marketplace, the more we help reduce the lodging industry's carbon footprint."

"The GHA has done a terrific job of informing consumers about the green movement and educating them about green products. Consumers are much more informed today and they are incorporating more environmental factors into their decisions."

COMMUNICATE & EDUCATE

As educators of the world's travelers, hotels introduce guests to many of the latest technologies and greening is often central to the message. This works to a hotel's advantage through the intuitive premise of expertise – the greater the knowledge and application displayed, the greater customer confidence earned.

To maximize this potential, hotels must take proactive steps to communicate their greening efforts to prospective customers, as well as professional groups and the media. Simply labeling yourself as "green" has actually become rather passé – the novelty has worn off. Today's global awareness has compelled many travelers to examine not only their individual eco-impact, but also their corporate contribution through the businesses they patronize.

Hotels should have well-constructed Web pages that detail the specific practices and products that make them green. Videos, photogalleries, and testimonials complement standard descriptions and provide real-world examples for prospective guests to consider. Griffin said that, while environmental responsibility should remain the sincere focus, there's



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nothing wrong with hotels leveraging their conservation and preservation achievements as business drivers.

"Hotels are looking at greening as a marketing tool and they are looking at how it influences their guests," she said. "If it's a property that gets a lot of their business from meetings, they will want to promote green meetings. If it's a smaller property that specializes in weddings, they can educate their customers on how to plan a green wedding from the food selection to the lighting."

Moreover, suggesting local green activities further instills the environmental message. Lastly, offering tips for green living will help guests maintain eco-friendly practices at home, while maintaining a perspective that will likely lead them back to green hotels for future business.

GOING GREEN: For the Greater Good and a Greener Bottom Line

By Michael A. Robinson

Social scientists and political pundits love to bandy about a term that reflects a sea change in the way people think and, more importantly, act. The analysts refer to such a seismic shift in behavior as a "tipping point."

And so it goes with the green hotel movement. Just recently, a decision by America's largest retailer reflected an environmental consciousness that arguably began on Earth Day in 1970, but will soon become an integral part of traveling for millions of people in the United States: Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., adopted an environmental labeling program for all the products it sells. That bold step could redefine the design, makeup, and economic footprints of thousands of consumer goods sold around the globe.

More importantly, said Patricia Griffin, president and founder of the "Green" Hotels Association, Wal-Mart is training consumers to be more aware of how the products they buy and use can affect Earth's fragile ecosystem. Already, surveys consistently show that a majority of travelers support green initiatives at hotels, whether that means not washing the bed linens every day or simply recycling paper products.

"I think Wal-Mart's decision is going to have an enormous impact across America, and that will definitely affect hotels," Griffin said. "Wal-Mart is such a big company that its green labeling program really could have a transformative impact. When you think about all the criticism Wal-Mart has endured over the years [from environmentalists], this is really welcome news. Millions of people shop at Wal-Mart every day.

"Now [consumers] are going to see exactly how the products they buy affect the environment. They will take that attitude with them when they check into a

hotel. In the next few years, guests are just going to expect that the hotel where they are staying will be eco-friendly. They'll be disappointed if it isn't. So, going green doesn't just cut costs. It's an essential marketing tool."

For the hotel industry, the timing couldn't be better. After all, the nation is dealing with a challenging economy, with unemployment approaching 10 percent. If a giant retailer can see the economics behind a sound environmental policy, so can hoteliers, who by definition are all about making guests feel relaxed and welcome.

They know only too well that cutting water and electricity use cuts overhead costs that falls directly to the bottom line. As the economy recovers, hoteliers will seek ways to cut their costs and cater to the growing demand among guests to be more environmentally responsible.

"There is no question that being a green hotel saves money each and every month," Griffin said. "More and more, hotel managers are going to see – and I don't think it will take that much more time – that going green is not just good for the environment or great PR. It will absolutely result in increased profits.

"To me, that is the simplest thing anyone could ask you to do, and that is to ask you to conserve. In the next five years, I predict that many more hotels will ask their guests to do just that. And if they don't, their guests are going to ask why the hotel isn't doing more to protect the environment.

"My No. 1 goal for hoteliers would be to have an understanding of their property's impact on their destination and to be in control of that. They can move their cities and their states toward stronger greening programs through their own properties and their marketing," said Griffin.

Member hotels have chosen to take advantage of "Green" Hotel Association® membership because it's the perfect marriage of eco-friendliness and bottom-line savings.





GHA Member Grand Hyatt Denver Downtown – already with many green initiatives in place – continues to seek better and more environmentally conscious methods. Here is a sampling of the measures the Grand Hyatt Denver has in place: CFL bulbs in all guest rooms; cardboard and paper recycling programs; light sensors in offices, restrooms, and employee work areas; bed linen changes upon request only; more energy-efficient guest and service elevators; and low-flow showerheads and sink aerators.

RAISING THE BAR & RAISING AWARENESS

To maintain their greenness, hotels will start asking more of their vendors – more green options for products, packaging, and delivery. Short-term economics have always been the speed bump of innovation, but as all recognize the long-term benefits – both economically and environmentally – of greening, the industry will see that these developments are literally an open road to long-term viability.

Buttressing this thought will be greater scrutiny of “green” claims. As awareness increases, vendors selling to hotels and hotels wooing customers will need rock-solid explanations of what makes their product or property one of environmental responsibility. Company Web sites are the first step for promoting one’s green measures, but social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter will hold tremendous potential for hotels to keep their customers informed of fresh ideas.

Green-focused professional groups will play an increasingly important role in the learning process by providing hoteliers and vendors productive forums for exchanging ideas and brainstorming new green strategies. Example: A national network, Chef’s Collaborative, unites chefs, producers, educators, and culinary fans interested in building a more sustainable food supply.

Encouragement will also come from government initiatives like the EPA’s WasteWise program. Established in 1994, WasteWise educates its business, government, and nonprofit members on the benefits of reducing solid waste. Look for a growing number of green awards and recognition through such groups, as well as business organizations.

Media attention often follows significant greening achievements, but hotels will need to take proactive steps to ensure their efforts are noticed. Not only is such exposure good for business, but it will also help advance the overall greening effort.

“I think we have seen a dramatic increase in greening and I think it will be ongoing,” Griffin said. “I think hoteliers will learn how these things will save them money, create camaraderie among staff, and improve their business. Greening certainly makes the guest more enthusiastic about your property because you are protecting your destination.”

That said, greening success must be a perpetual pursuit – a continuous quest to scale another cliff, rather than rest upon the plateau of complacency.

“No one is ever done being green,” Griffin said. “There will always be new options, new ideas, and new products available, so we need to be aware of these new developments and apply them in whatever we do.”

"Green" Hotels Association.

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EDUCATOR: Faculty and public employees interested in "green" programs in the hospitality industry. Faculty and Public Employees - \$200/year. Includes your logo or photo with web listing. Add \$25/year for mailing addresses outside the US.

ENVIRONMENTALIST: Organizations and associations interested in Earth-saving ideas and wishing to support "Green" Hotels Association® members. Organizations/Associations: Up to 50 employees - \$300/year; 51+ employees - \$400/year. Includes your logo or photo with web listing. Add \$25/year for mailing addresses outside the US.

TRAVELER: Individuals, tourists, business travelers, those interested in supporting "green" hotels and travel; \$50/year.



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"Green" Hotels Association® Membership Application

Property/Name: _____

No. Floors: _____ No. Rooms: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zipcode: _____

Reservations No.: _____

Phone No.: _____ Fax No.: _____

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Internet Address: _____

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Deirdre Wallace, Hotelier Ambrose Hotel



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