



Featured Stories

**What gets measured gets managed**

29 May 2009 7:48 AM

By Hervé Houdré

HotelNewsNow.com columnist



The hotel industry is endorsing [sustainable development](#) more, and most hotel companies have included it in their business strategy. To make a difference between greenwashing (a term used to describe the practice of companies disingenuously spinning their products and policies as environmentally friendly) and a serious plan, it's important that hotels and hotel companies implement measurements and report them because no strategy is viable without the ability to measure and recognize it.



Hervé Houdré

Measurements should indicate milestones of a hotel's sustainable development efforts and defining objectives. These will illustrate clearly the improvements observed in each category regularly (at minimum annually). They should be as simple as possible to read and understand for the public. After a while, it'll be interesting to compare results of hotels in the same division. Maybe one day soon, we'll be able to benchmark sustainability efforts versus our competitive set the same way we benchmark revenue per available room through Smith Travel Research.

Key measurements relating to the carbon footprint of a hotel include:

- Electricity;
- Gas and water consumption;
- Landfilled, recycled and composted waste; and
- Employees' transportation impact.

These measurements prove a hotel's commitment to the environment and help improve its results every year. There are other measurements that can be organized around the social responsibility section (people) of the triple bottom line (profit, planet and people)—for example, the number of hours per employee devoted to charitable work, the number of training hours per employee, the outcome of charitable and community programs, diversity within the hotel and lost hours statistics.

Reporting

To help independent hotels measure and improve their impact on the world persistently, it's highly recommended to use a measurement program. Some of these are certifications such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED EB (Existing Buildings) and ISO 14001. They concentrate solely on the environmental impact of the hotel. Others are complete and include the three Ps (people, planet, profit) such as the Global Reporting Initiative, which was created in the late '90s by Ceres, a coalition of companies interested in sustainability; the United Nations Environment Program; and the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. Sustainable Travel International just issued its new STEP 2.0 certification program.

Hotel companies are developing their own measurement systems that help each hotel record all statistics and improve itself against its own previous results. More importantly, it gives a chance for a hotel to benchmark itself against other company properties. Such an opportunity helps improve the economic bottom line because each hotel learns to better manage its utility costs. InterContinental Hotels Group recently launched the Green Engage program, which will measure the carbon footprint of its 4,200 hotels worldwide. Such a program is extremely valuable for owners, too, because hotels will be able to consistently improve their impact on the environment and their energy costs.

Latest Newsletter Articles

- STR posts US results for 17-23 May 2009
- STR posts Canada results for 17-23 May 2009
- What gets measured gets managed
- Spanish hotel association appeals to politicians
- The state of luxury: A special report (Part 1)
- The state of luxury: A special report (Part 2)
- The state of luxury: A special report (Part 3)
- 5 things to know: 29 May 2009

Other Articles Like This

- There are no items to display

Other Articles By This Writer

- A smart business decision
- Four steps to engage staff in sustainable development
- Give up giving up! Go sustainable!
- Sustainability in the kitchen: a glossary
- Coming to terms with sustainability
- Houdré: Implement a 'sustainable' strategy
- Houdré: SD boosts bottom line
- Hervé Houdré: A sustainable wake-up call

Newsletter 

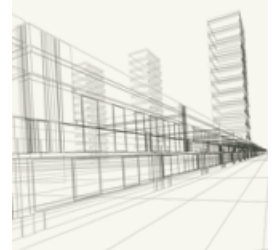
Catch up on news, data and analysis by registering for HotelNewsNow.com's free, daily e-mail newsletter by clicking [here](#).

Archives 

Access STR and STR Global press releases, reports and columns by clicking [here](#).



The past,
present
and future
of the hotel
industry



Whether you need high-level overviews on existing and future hotel supply or detailed reports on specific markets, STR has your pipeline needs covered.



www.strglobal.com
+1 615 824 8664

FREE Webinar

Inspire Online Travel Shoppers
>> [Learn more](#)
June 4 - 2 pm EST

Events 

5/31/2009 - New York University International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference
6/4/2009 - Webinar - How to Stand Out, Inspire and

To be recognized for objectivity, reporting can be made through a third-party company, such as EnviRelation. Eric Ricaurte, a company executive, said reporting demonstrates the commitment of a hotel to sustainable development values and avoids greenwashing. The challenge is that programs are more global in their approach and not yet specifically adapted to individual hotels. But for those hotels that consider they don't have enough measurements or information to put in a report, Ricaurte suggests reporting anyway because most of the time properties find they do much more than they think, and it will engage them permanently into improving their performance. He believes negative trends shouldn't restrain hoteliers from reporting. On the contrary, it proves the seriousness of the work of the property or the company and its efforts to fulfill its ambition. Sustainable development is a long journey. Reporting is a work in progress.

A sustainability report is an excellent communication tool. Its impact on stakeholders is the reporting, disclosure and transparency of the commitment the company makes to sustainable development ideals. Clients usually are impressed knowing the actions a hotel has undertaken and are saying more frequently they'll chose a property based on this extraordinary criteria.

Hervé Houdré began his tenure as general manager of the Willard InterContinental Washington D.C. in 2004. He is recognized for introducing refinements which impact profit and increase market share. Under his leadership, the Willard InterContinental has embarked on a sustainability program, Willard InterContinental - The Next 100 Years. Houdré, who has written a white paper, Sustainable Hospitality© : Sustainable Development in the Hotel Industry, and his team, have put into place a five-year roadmap that defines and quantifies the mid-term SD goals for the hotel. The hotel published its first GRI Standard Sustainability Report available at www.willarddc.com/sd.

Motivate the Online Travel Shopper
6/10/2009 - Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International's Affordable Meetings West
6/16/2009 - Budget & Economy Hotels World
6/21/2009 - Travel & Tourism Research



Comments

1 Comments

[Show All](#)

29 May 2009 at 11:55 AM EST

In response to: What gets measured gets managed

gamefish42 commented:

The article is right on the money. In today's hotel and resort competitive market place and the state of the global travel industry, it is very important for property managers to deploy process measuring and improvement methodologies like Lean Six Sigma for service organization. Deploying a lean six sigma lean service model helps the organization to 1) focus on the customer; 2)transform itself to meet customer needs; 3) enable itself to create consistent, flexible, effective, and efficient processes and to react quickly to the customer's changing needs. This organizational transformation is facilitated through the collection of data from all hotel and resort key work process and the use of the six sigma DMAIC process improvement tools and methodologies. The web site www.isixsigma.com is a great place to start you six sigma journey. Robert Wiebel, CM Six Sigma Master Black Belt gamefish42@aol.com

[Login](#) to post your comment

[Subscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Sponsors](#) | [RSS](#) | [Submit Press Release](#) | [About Us](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Legal Disclaimer](#)

Copyright © 2004-2009 Smith Travel Research /DBA HotelNewsNow.com (HNN). All Rights Reserved.