



GREEN
HOTEL
CASE
STUDY

RADISSON LOS ANGELES AIRPORT HOTEL



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OVERVIEW - The Greening of the Radisson LAX

The decision to “go green” at the Radisson LAX began as a vision in the mind of Area Managing Director, Cindy Boulton, and grew from the influence of multiple stakeholders, not the least of which were the guests themselves. “It’s clear that today’s traveler is conscious of the ecological effects that travel has on our environment, and they are looking for ways to minimize their travel carbon footprint,” says Boulton. “One of the best ways they can do that is by choosing a hotel that is committed to environmentally sensitive business practices. We set out to ensure our business was meeting that objective.”

While the property had already implemented many of the cost-savings initiatives associated with going green, such as energy efficient lighting and low-flow plumbing fixtures, the environmental program was officially launched in the spring of 2009 when the hotel made the decision to become Green Seal™ certified. Achieving certification with Green Seal, a respected independent environmental certifier, would ensure that practices met rigorous, science-based criteria and would provide consumer confidence. The goal was achieved in November 2009, when the Radisson LAX became the first hotel within the Radisson brand to achieve Green Seal Certification under the GS-33 standard.

PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT – What Have We Done?

It takes a combination of committed leadership, diligent management, and cohesive teamwork to effect lasting sustainable change. With this in mind, the Radisson LAX established their Green Team under the inspired leadership of executive management, using the expertise of a dedicated project manager and divided the responsibilities among a team comprised of employees from all departments. The responsibilities of the Green Team include establishing goals for energy, water and waste reduction, tracking and monitoring performance metrics, conducting property inspections, reviewing and updating SOPs, conducting employee training, reviewing purchasing activities, developing engagement activities, and identifying marketing and public relations opportunities.

The elements of the Radisson LAX Environmental Program include:

- Waste Minimization - Recycling and composting programs, office paper waste reduction program, reduced usage of disposable food service items, and donation programs for leftover un-served banquet food and partially used guest amenities.
- Energy Efficiency - Lighting retrofits, operating and office equipment upgrades, HVAC monitoring and maintenance, general preventive maintenance program, window films in select locations, and staff training on energy awareness.
- Water Conservation – Installation of low-flow plumbing fixtures, leak detection and preventive maintenance, drought resistant landscaping, water conserving grounds-keeping procedures, and employee training and awareness.
- Pollution prevention - Use environmentally friendly cleaning and laundry products, reduction in use of aerosol cans, reduction in use of chlorine and other hazardous chemicals, integrated pest management, and low-VOC content for paints and furnishings.
- Environmental Purchasing – Selection of paper products with post-consumer recycled content, selection of durable goods, bulk purchasing, Preferred Vendor list for suppliers who take back reusable packaging, and staff training to consider life-cycle costs in purchasing decisions.
- Guest Awareness & Engagement – In-room recycling containers, public space recycling containers, towel and linen reuse program, guestroom directory information, internal TV channel with environmental messages, and public space reader-board and video messages.
- Employee Awareness & Engagement - Green Orientation program, green departmental training programs, Green Tip of the Month on communication boards, Green News section in monthly employee newsletter, Green Team quarterly meetings and inspections, and volunteer opportunities (Beach Clean-Up day, America Recycles Day pledge drive, Earth Hour participation, and Green Halloween contest).

GOALS & BENCHMARKING – Where Will We Take This?

Because the hotel has so many important stakeholders, the reasons for embarking upon the Green Program were many and varied. The goals, therefore, were established to meet the different needs of all stakeholders: Guests, Employees, Owners, Community, and the Environment.

The multi-faceted goals include:

- Cost savings in electricity, gas, water and waste disposal
- Reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions and ecological impact
- Revenue generation through new client base of environmentally conscious customers
- Ability to secure contracts with government entities and large corporations by meeting their environmental purchasing requirements
- Marketplace differentiation as a green hospitality leader

- Enhance reputation within the industry and community
- Improve health and safety of employees and guests
- Compliance with government regulations

To help calculate the measurable benefits, the hotel utilizes the Energy Star Portfolio Manager to benchmark energy and water usage. This system provided a method for the hotel to establish a baseline, compare building performance against national averages, set challenging but reasonable targets, and monitor performance on an ongoing basis.

OUTCOMES & ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT – Is It Working?

Measuring green success is a tricky endeavor. While some of the benefits of a green program are easily quantifiable, such as utility costs and waste volume, many benefits are intangible, such as employee wellness, guest approval, and stakeholder loyalty. The hotel found that the more successful they were in achieving and communicating the tangible results, the greater the intangible outcomes.

Measurable Achievements:

- In the first year of certification, electricity use was cut by 17.5%, with annual overall energy cost savings of over \$55,000.
- Greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by 11.5%.
- Solid waste was reduced by 45% (volume per occupied room).

Intangible Outcomes:

- Increased web presence with positive public relations messages
- Inclusion and affiliation with Green Travel websites
- Increased employee awareness and engagement with green issues and concerns
- Clearly defined expectations allowed employees to align themselves with the mission and vision of the company and personally identify their role in the overall strategy
- Increased employee morale: loyalty and pride, health and safety, retention, and recruitment opportunities
- Positive guest engagement with green initiatives

Some of the positive unintended outcomes include:

- Increased accountability for initiatives throughout all departments
- Early detection of underperforming or malfunctioning equipment
- Increased focus on capital improvement projects that will improve building performance, reduce GHG emissions and prove ROI
- Improved productivity through efficiency, safety, and awareness

Since utilizing the Green Seal standard as guidance for establishing green practices, the Radisson LAX has also become affiliated with the following Green Hotel initiatives:

- Green Key Global – 4-Key Rating in the Eco-Rating System
- California Green Lodging Program Leadership Level
- Green Hotels Association Member
- Energy Star Partner

RELEVANCE TO TRAVELER – Does It Matter?

Increasingly it is becoming less of an option and more of a mandate for hotels to adopt green practices if they want to maintain their position in the market place. According the [J.D. Powers 2009 Hotel Guest Satisfaction Index Survey](#), awareness of “green” programs has a strong impact on overall hotel guest satisfaction, and the [International Ecotourism Society](#) reports that more than two-thirds of U.S. travelers consider active protection of the environment to be part of a hotel’s responsibility. And yet, a [study conducted by PhoCusWright](#) revealed that only 8% of travelers believe it is easy to find green travel options.

When the Radisson LAX began the journey toward sustainability in the spring of 2009, there were no green certified hotels in Los Angeles. By the end of 2009, two hotels in Los Angeles had achieved Green Seal certification, and by the end of 2010, the number rose to five; three of these five are located within the Gateway to L.A. business district, with more in process. It is important to the Radisson LAX team to set an example that will encourage other hotels to adopt green practices that not only improve their overall performance, but will reduce negative environmental impacts and provide more green choices to visitors who come to Los Angeles.

REAL WORLD EXAMPLE – Green In Action!

Sharing the Green Love

The leadership team of the Radisson LAX believes that being green is not simply a strategy to gain an edge in the marketplace; environmental stewardship is a responsibility that all businesses must embrace in order to sustain the communities that make doing business possible. After all, what traveler would want to stay in a green hotel that was located in an ecologically compromised or polluted locale? Believing that a green community will enhance the lives of residents and visitors alike, the Radisson LAX leadership chose share its knowledge and experience with neighboring businesses, including competitors, to help make the Gateway to L.A. business district a healthier and more vibrant destination. Area Managing Director, Cindy Boulton, was the driving force behind the “Gateway to a Greener L.A.” initiative that provides support and mentorship to businesses within the district to implement green practices and achieve green certifications. To learn more about the initiative, visit www.gatewaytola.org.

Telling the Green Story

The best way to communicate a vision is to tell a story – and one of the most effective ways to do that is through video. The Radisson LAX set out to engage employees and guests by documenting efforts and initiatives through video and social media. Environmental activities are planned regularly, complete with contests and opportunities for participation, and then documented through video and broadcast through an internal TV channel and social networking channels such as Facebook and YouTube. Utilizing this medium has helped to unite stakeholders by increasing awareness and engagement and creating positive relationships through a shared vision. To view the videos, visit their YouTube channel, at www.youtube.com/radissonlosangeles.

Sustainability as a Journey, not a Destination

While earning the distinction of Green Seal's Silver Level certification marks a significant milestone, it is only the beginning of an ongoing process for the Radisson LAX team. "Being green is a continual process, and one that is integrated into our long-range business plan," says Cindy Boulton. "We will continually search for ways to improve and advance our sustainable business practices."