Benefits of Green Seal Certification for Hotels

Presentation to Boston Green Tourism
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Topics Covered

• Key characteristics of sustainable hotels
• Key environmental and economic benefits
• Proving your green credentials and value of certification
• Brief on Green Seal and its hospitality program
Key Characteristics of Sustainable Hotels

- Energy/water conservation and management
- Waste minimization, management
- Avoid hazardous substances
- Responsible purchasing, policies
- Establish green team to institutionalize
Key Environmental and Economic Benefits of Green Hotels

GS-certified hotels (examples):
- Invested $20,000 in upgrades and now saves $225,000 per year
- Increased revenue from green business by $5.6 million over past 5 years
- Achieved reductions of 25% in natural gas costs and 18% in electricity costs
Key Environmental and Economic Benefits (con’t.)

- Nearly 50% waste reduction
- Additional documented savings in water use, waste hauled, paper used, etc.
- Booked over $200,000 can directly tie to GS
- Cities like Chicago and Los Angeles promoting green hotels and bringing in convention business
Proving Your Green Credentials

• More consumers and companies seeking green hotels – can be requirement of RFPs
• Independent validation more credible
• Best is 3rd-party certification based on scientifically valid standards, open process
The Value of Certification

• Opens doors to a new market of green consumers
  ✓ “Super Greenies”—Gen X, high-income, higher spending lifestyle
  ✓ Certification makes it easier for them to find your hotel

• Helps you meet corporate and government bids
  ✓ Purchasers and meeting planners are required to select the greenest options
  ✓ A certification makes it easier to respond to requirements

• Proven reductions in your environmental footprint
  ✓ Hotels use less energy, water, chemicals and create less waste
  ✓ Cut waste by nearly half
The Value of Certification (con’t.)

• Positions your property ahead of the competition
  ✓ Guests increasingly factor greenness into their choices
  ✓ AAA, Travelocity, Expedia indicate certified properties
  ✓ Puts you in an elite group of environmentally active hotels

• Helps improve guest and employee satisfaction
  ✓ Guests expect to see concern for environment, health
  ✓ Shows staff that you care about their health and community
What To Look For In Certification

- Program run by organization without conflict-of-interest
- Standard development process involves stakeholders, including public
- Transparency in criteria, methods, and data used
- Requirements based on life-cycle impacts, best science
- Promotes leadership levels in sustainability
- Open access to licensees of all sizes, all countries
- Includes regular site audits of facility, authority to do so
- Certification mark is trademarked and use is policed
- Requirements are periodically reviewed/updated, considering technology and market
Guidelines for Ecolabels

- ISO 14020 Environmental Labels and Declarations – General Principles
- ISO 14024 Type I Environmental Labeling – Principles and Procedures
- Global Ecolabelling Network membership requirements
- American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Guidelines
- US EPA criteria for third-party certifiers
- Consumers Union criteria for “What Makes a Good Ecolabel”
- US FTC Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims
Green Seal’s Mission

*Green Seal is a non-profit environmental organization that uses science-based programs to empower consumers, purchasers, and companies to create a more sustainable world.*
Green Seal’s Experience

- Over 21 years of experience in promoting environmental leadership in the marketplace
- Covers a variety of product/service categories using multi-attribute (life-cycle) approach
- Unbiased, science-based, third-party credibility
- No financial interest in products, companies
- Recognized as a leading seal of environmental certification by Federal and local government, media, and business leaders
- ANSI-accredited, ISO-compliant
Green Seal’s Certification Program

- Standards covering 338 categories
- Many recognized by market as the green standard for the category
- Over 3500 products/services certified
  - range from windows, electric chillers, and lodging facilities to institutional cleaners, paints, paper, personal care products, etc.
Green Seal’s Green Lodging Program

- Active program since 1995
- Purchasing Guide (*Greening Your Property*)
- Certification Program for hotels
- Special projects (e.g., suppliers project)
- AH&LA Environment & Engineering Committee
- Participation in conferences, workshops
- Articles in *Lodging, Nat’l Hotel Exec Magazine*
Standard for Lodging Properties (GS-33)

- Covers Waste Minimization; Energy Efficiency, Conservation, and Management; Management of Fresh Water Resources; Waste Water Management; Hazardous Substances; Environmental Purchasing Policy
- Has entry level (Bronze) plus Silver, Gold levels
- Adopted by Chicago, Los Angeles, States
- Standard freely available on Green Seal Web site
Standard for Lodging Properties (GS-33) (cont’d)

• Standard has number of product-related requirements
  • for example, criteria for paint, tissue and writing paper, cleaning chemicals, laundry and dishwashing detergents, pesticides
• Compliant products are readily available from leading hotel suppliers
GS Lodging Certification Process

- Prepare your property based on GS-33
- Provide required documentation – Guidebook available on GS-33 Web site page
- GS audit takes better part of one day
- Follow-up re deficiencies, often in purchasing, materials, organization
- Corrections required for final approval
- Overall process takes several months
Sample of GS-Certified Hotels

- Individual properties from such brands as Westin, Ritz Carlton, Hilton, Sheraton, Intercontinental, Fairmont, Doubletree, Marriott, Embassy Suites, Hyatt
- All Great Wolf Lodges
- Retreats, conference centers
- Several National Park lodges
Value of GS Certification

“What a journey! ... And I mean that in a really positive sense.”
- Cindy Boulton, Area Managing Director, Radisson Hotel, Los Angeles (LAX), CA

“We have been working hard on accomplishing this goal and are very proud to have finally achieved it.”
- Gus Castaneda, General Manager, The Mark Spencer Hotel, Portland, OR

“Green Seal certification is a milestone achievement for us, and we are proud of our commitment to sustainability.”
- Keri Robinson, General Manager Sheraton San Diego Hotel, San Diego, CA
Value of GS Certification (con’t.)

Quick Ways to Spread the Word About Your Green Leadership

- Publish a press release
- Use the Green Seal Mark in ads and marketing materials
- Create a promotional video
- Track and share your savings
- Get involved with community green activities
- Inform your local Chamber and CVB
- Make sure you are listed on green travel sites
- Educate staff with a Green Seal webinar
- Encourage staff to spread the word
- Reward your “Green Team” for their success
- Celebrate with a special staff event
- Notify management of your accomplishment
- Include the Green Seal Mark on internal messaging
- Have a “Green Party” with guests
- Put the Green Seal Mark on lobby signage
- Use the Mark on all printed materials
- Order plaques for the lobby
- Use info sheet and towel cards in rooms
Certification Fees

- Fee schedules for hotel certification on Green Seal’s Web site
- Fee covers evaluation (incl. audit) and license to use Green Seal certification mark
- Average hotel (250 rooms): $1750 (Bronze level); $2500 (Silver level), $2500 (Gold level)
- Small hotel: $1450-1950; Large hotel: $1950-3000
- Annual monitoring and fee
Conclusions

• Greening your hotel involves many aspects, but all are practicable

• Benefits can be significant, both to environment and your bottom line

• Consumers increasingly seeking green, but want independent and credible certification

Thank You!
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