

Entrepreneurs, Hotels Cashing In on Traveler Willingness to Pay More for Purified Air

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NATIONAL REPORT—The number of hotels asking guests to pay more for rooms with filtered air is on the rise with the continued growth of [PURE Solutions](#)' PURE Room program and the recent introduction of [UV Flu Technology](#)'s ABC "Purity +" Rooms. According to Brian Brault, CEO of PURE Solutions, his PURE Room program is now represented in 250 hotels in North America and should be in close to 300 hotels by the end of the year. Outside of North America, another 20 hotels are represented. By room count, there are now approximately 5,000 PURE Rooms—mostly in the United States but in 12 other countries as well. Jack Lennon, president of UV Flu Technology, says his company currently has its ABC "Purity +" Rooms in eight hotels. Lennon officially launched his company's program in March of this year; Pure Solutions has been selling its PURE Room program to hotels for seven years.

With both companies' programs, hotels charge a premium for rooms that incorporate air purification and other systems. Brault says most of his customers are now charging \$20 a night for PURE Rooms with some charging as much as \$24. Lennon says his customers are asking at least \$15 per night extra for ABC "Purity +" Rooms. Hotels participating in the PURE Room program sign a two-year contract and can either pay for the system upfront or pay nothing upfront and then share revenues from the PURE Rooms. Hotels implementing ABC "Purity +" Rooms also sign two-year contracts, pay nothing upfront and then share revenues based on the number of ABC "Purity +" Rooms sold.

There are significant differences between the program offered by Cheektowaga, N.Y.-based PURE Solutions and that offered by Yarmouthport, Mass.-based UV Flu Technology.

A PURE Room undergoes a seven step process before being made available to a guest. The air handling unit is cleaned and disinfected. A tea tree oil cartridge is placed in the unit to help maintain healthy conditions. All soft surfaces are cleaned to remove dirt, bacteria and mold. A one-time ozone shock treatment is performed, helping to remove any lingering odors. A topical treatment is applied to room surfaces to prevent bacteria growth. A medical grade air purifier is placed in the room and encasements are placed around mattresses and pillows. An ABC "Purity +" Room is deodorized and disinfected and then a medical grade air purifier is placed in the room.

Relief from Unhealthy Conditions

The goal of both room concepts is to provide guests with relief from allergies, mold, bacteria, odors and other conditions that make staying in a frequently used guestroom uncomfortable.

"According to the American Lung Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in four people have either asthma or some form of respiratory allergy," Brault says.

The "ABC" of UV Flu Technology's "Purity +" Room stands for "Allergens, Bacteria and Contaminants." Lennon says his company's purifier addresses those and targets volatile organic compounds—those compounds emitted from items such as carpeting, paint, wallpaper and even furniture. Lingering odors from cigarette smoke are also eliminated. Lennon says one-third of guest complaints pertain to cigarette odor in a nonsmoking room.

A year ago, Hyatt Hotels & Resorts announced that it would add PURE Rooms at all full-service Hyatt hotels across the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. The rooms are now called Respire by Hyatt—Hypo-Allergenic Rooms. Brault says the rollout of Hyatt's Respire by Hyatt—Hypo-Allergenic Rooms is

nearly complete at the participating 130 Hyatt properties. Landing the Hyatt deal was huge for PURE Solutions because of Hyatt's presence in most key primary and secondary U.S., Canada and Caribbean markets.

Others Attracted to Room Concept

"In the past year we have quadrupled the number of Marriotts and Hiltons that we are in," Brault says. "We are making headway with Starwood. The guest feedback has been amazing and the amount of money hotels are making has been outstanding."

Brault says typically hotel owners will allocate an entire floor as a PURE Floor. This helps with the marketability of the program. Both PURE Solutions and UV Flu Technology are providing training and marketing support to their customers. Travelers seeking a PURE Room at a Hyatt property, for example, can select a Respire by Hyatt—Hypo-Allergenic Room when making a reservation through Hyatt's website.

Who is most likely to ask for a room that has purified air and other pure qualities?

"The number one buying group is the corporate business traveler that has a sensitivity—a male," Brault says. "The number two buying group is the super mom with two kids."

According to the American Hotel & Lodging Association, the U.S. hotel market currently consists of more than 51,000 guestrooms. That means roughly about 10 percent of those rooms address the needs of travelers with breathing issues and chemical sensitivities. That is good news for companies like PURE Solutions, UV Flu Technology, and any other company seeking to take advantage of the demand for pure air.

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