



# Case Study of The Brown Hotel

## Keys to Success



**Project Description**



**Economic Value**



**Challenges & Advice**



**Benefits**



**Stewardship Meaning**



In the hotel business, toilet paper, produce, food staples and other items are packaged for delivery in cardboard. For a large hotel, that can mean an abundance of cardboard waste. Marc Salmon, director of Human Resources at The Brown Hotel, an historic luxury hotel in Louisville, saw the volume of items that could be kept out of landfills and decided to make recycling a building-wide project. Now twice weekly, all nonconfidential office paper, guestroom newspapers, magazines, catalogs and phone books are picked up by Louisville Metro Recycling, usually filling 14 large recycling "toters." The Shred-It Company picks up all confidential office paper once a month.

Other hotel projects include recycling ink cartridges and five-gallon plastic mayonnaise buckets instead of tossing them into the trash.

"All guestroom hallways and bedside, desk and standing lamps are now

equipped with energy-saving CFL light bulbs. Thermostats in guestrooms have been replaced with energy-saving digital thermostats to cut energy use significantly."

Since June 2007, the Brown has been offering stayover guests the option of only laundering towels and replacing bedding on a per request basis, causing a significant savings in water resources. Laundry products that use less water and meet Green Seal standards are used and produce softer, cleaner towels and tend to prevent fraying.

Besides the positive impact that the hotel's recycling had on the environment, Salmon was pleased to see an economic benefit, as well. During the first year of the recycling program for aluminum, glass and newspapers, the hotel saved 50 percent in solid waste disposal costs.

"Each time we have our trash compactor picked up, it costs \$600. In April 2008, we had the compactor picked

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up three times. Since the hotel began recycling, there has been a huge savings. In April 2009, the compactor was picked up only once. This was a savings of \$1,200 for that month,” says Salmon.

? There were challenges along the way, such as finding a vendor for the recyclables. Salmon went to private industry, but found no interest, so he turned to local government. Louisville Metro now picks up the hotel’s recyclables. Salmon says the hotel management was not expecting a payback; they just wanted to get the recyclables out of the waste stream.

Another challenge was the fact that the hotel building is old and doesn’t have a classic loading bin. This increases the workload of the hotel employees and workers removing the materials for recycling.



Many hotel supplies are delivered in cardboard boxes, which are recycled.

The bartenders had to work harder and change their routine to place garbage in one bin and beer bottles in another. Salmon was pleasantly surprised that the hourly staff eagerly participated in the recycling efforts

Salmon stresses that “you can’t communicate enough with people, including your employees, about what you are doing and need from them. “ The money that hotel employees saved the facility can go for staff raises.

Salmon also explains that projects must be cost-appropriate and materials of good quality. Choose vendors that use sustainable practices. Buy from local farmers when possible. The hotel’s projects have created multiple benefits.

“As of March 1, 2009, our firm’s share of the wood saved through Shred-It’s recycling program amounts to 58 trees saved,” says Salmon.

+ From a marketing standpoint, business and government groups like what the Brown is doing. Salmon says the hotel took a green survey, and the results have The Brown in an excellent bidding position because



Some of The Brown Hotel staff members pose outside the building.

some people will only stay in hotels that have a good sustainability program in place.

Having digital thermostats in the guest rooms and public areas also raises guest satisfaction and saves money.



Being a member of KY EXCEL is a good source of pride for the hotel to mention when bidding. Salmon says, “We were doing things already to impact the environment, because it was good business sense to do those things.”

**HELPFUL HINT:** Buy locally grown produce! Frozen food requires 10 times more energy to produce.