It Pays to go Green!!

One of the major reasons why many organizations, and indeed hotels, fear adopting green business practices is the perceived cost of implementing green strategies. It is assumed that green strategies are expensive and are not cost-effective. This assumption should not deter you from greening your business as most green strategies are economical in the long run. This week’s Eco-byte will report on specific global examples that illustrate the business case for environmental sustainability.

Green strategies results into a win-win situation for the environment and your business. The environment benefits because the pollution levels are minimized and/or fewer resources are used in production. Similarly, your business benefits from sustainable practices as the hotel’s operational costs are often reduced.

Green practices that can be applied in hotels to save on unnecessary costs fall in the areas of;

- Pollution prevention
- Resource conservation
- Waste minimization
- Local purchase of products

**Case studies**

Specifically, some well documented case studies that vindicate the concept of the economic benefits of sustainability include:

1. Holiday Inn in Toronto, Canada, saved 14,852 Canadian dollars per year by installing low flow showerheads and faucet aerators (Green Hotels and Responsible Tourism Initiatives). Similarly, Zero Waste Alliance report that installation of low flow showerheads and faucet aerators in La Quanta Inn (San Francisco) resulted to the hotel chain saving US$ 1.50 per room per month. The hotel also replaced the toilets with ultra-flow toilets at the cost of US$ 3,250. The outcome of this was savings of 680,000 liters of water per year, and the action had a payback period of 2.1 years.

2. The Fairmount Royal York invested 25,000 Canadian Dollars in energy conservation program that involved the replacement of leaky steam traps and fix leaks. This resulted to an annual saving of over 200,000 Canadian dollars (Green Hotels and Responsible Tourism Initiatives).

3. The Totem Pole Restaurant in Minnesota began a food waste reduction program by having the head-chef monitoring the food inventory, amount of food per meal and food waste percentage in each meal. This reduced the quantity of food wastes by 20%, and a cost saving amounting to US$ 450 per month (Zero Waste Alliance).

**Lessons**

Although the case studies highlighted are in North America, a number of relevant lessons can be derived:

1. Some sustainability practices require a significant amount of investments. However, since most sustainability practices entail a reduction of resource use, it is more likely that the practice will result into cost saving in the long run.

2. Some sustainability practices just need a change in operations practices with minimal investments. This change often does not alter the quality of the products or services offered.

**How can Ecotourism Kenya Assist in Greening your Hospitality Business?**

Ecotourism Kenya has an established Standards and Best Practice Program that includes the Eco-Rating Scheme. The scheme aims at promoting sustainable tourism in Kenya through auditing and certifying facilities. During the auditing process, the Eco-Rating team from Ecotourism Kenya will recommend on the areas in which your facility can improve on to increase its sustainability index.
Do you have a Kenyan case study in which Sustainability has resulted to cost-savings? Kindly share with us, and we may feature your story in our eco-byte.

It’s Smart To Be Responsible

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