

Survey - Guests Say Hotels Not 'Green' Enough

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Survey Reveals Guests Willing to do Their Part

Ever wonder how energy- and environmentally conscious the hotel guests next door are? According to a recent survey, they are likely reusing their towels, turning off the lights when they leave and recycling, if given the chance. The nationwide survey of 701 people was conducted by A Closer Look, Inc., (www.a-closer-look.com) an Atlanta-based market research company focused on the hospitality industry.

'Seventy-five percent of survey respondents said it is important to them that the hotel where they stay follows 'green practices,' and those surveyed are more than willing to do their part,' said David McAleese, CEO of A Closer Look. 'In recent years, Americans have become more environmentally aware, and thus have changed their behavior and the expectations of businesses they support.'

The majority of respondents are happy to reuse towels during part of their stay and say hotels could be doing more to help the environment. Many hotels have long been offering the option of reusing towels during a guest's stay, and 69% of people interviewed said they were given the option during their most recent hotel stay. Of those who were offered the option of reusing towels, 40% reused their towels for one day, 24% reused them for two or more days and 19% reused some of the towels and requested replacement of the rest. Only 16% of respondents said they requested new towels daily.

Recycling has become a way of life for many Americans at home and work, but hotels have been slow to adopt the practice in guest rooms. A whopping 94% of those surveyed said they have never stayed in a hotel that offered guestroom recycle bins. If made available, 69% said they would use them all the time, and 21% said they would use them sometimes. Only 10% of respondents thought they would be a nuisance.

Take a walk through a hotel corridor early in the morning and you are likely to see papers propped up against nearly every door. One sometimes wonders if they are going to waste, but the survey revealed they are not. Nearly two-thirds of respondents say they read the paper the majority of the time, and another 22% say they read it sometimes.

The one environmentally friendly practice that is being met with some resistance is offering bulk amenities (soap, shampoo and lotion) instead of individually packaged ones. Fifty-three percent of respondents prefer individually packaged amenities, and only 14 percent say they prefer bulk amenities. One-third of respondents said they don't care.

When questioned which environmentally friendly practice they are least likely to engage in, 60% said using bulk soap and amenities, 17% said using guestroom recycle bins, and 12% said reusing the towels.

In recent years, the demand for organic and eco-friendly food has been growing, and it is becoming important to hotel guests. Thirty-nine percent of respondents said that it is 'important' or 'somewhat important' to them that the hotel where they stay offers organic or eco-friendly food, however only six percent of respondents said it was offered during their last hotel stay. Fifty-seven percent of respondents said the hotel restaurant did not offer organic choices and 37% didn't know.

'Feedback is a powerful tool,' said McAleese. 'If you see a hotel is making an effort to be environmentally conscious, let the management know that it's appreciated, and if you observe the hotel is falling short in one or more areas, be sure to communicate that too.'

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