

The Role of Preventive Maintenance in the Greening of Hotel Operations

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Mintek Mobile Data Solutions Makes it Easy to Stay Green

DUNEDIN, FLA.- April 15, 2008 - 'Green' has been all the rage in lodging in recent months and for good reason. Record-breaking energy costs, news of climate change, an explosion in consumer interest, the proliferation of certification programs, and new government regulation have all contributed to the buzz. Whether prompted by these trends or the realization that going green is just smart business, thousands of owners and managers are changing the way they operate their hotels.

Fueling the push toward green has been the introduction of new products that make it easier to reduce energy and water consumption. Dual-flush toilets, low-flow showerheads, digital thermostats, guestroom energy management devices, ozone laundry systems, and highly efficient boilers are just some of the products that are helping hoteliers reduce costs and environmental impact. These new products join the many systems already in place that impact the overall efficiency of a building.

As with any resource-saving product, how it is maintained over its lifespan is critical to its effectiveness. If a high-efficiency toilet leaks water or a guestroom energy management system fails to control a heating and cooling system accurately, potential savings in water and energy are lost. If lime buildup is not removed from kitchen warewashing equipment regularly, there can be bad heat transfer. If coils on refrigeration equipment are not cleaned, or if PTAC filters are not changed, more energy is consumed. The list goes on.

Accountability Added to PM Process



To schedule and document preventive maintenance (PM) on items needing checked, most hotels still rely on inefficient paper-based processes. Oftentimes, paper gets misplaced, which leads to PMs or work orders not being completed. Inherent in paper-based processes is also a lack of accountability. There is no way to really know if an engineer was at a piece of equipment or other location in the hotel. Ultimately, this type of environment can make a hotel more vulnerable to maintenance problems that impact guest satisfaction and resource efficiency.

Fortunately for the lodging industry, Mintek Mobile Data Solutions developed WinTrack PM, an automated system that ensures that PMs, rounds and work orders are completed on time, and that maintenance issues do not slip through the cracks. Since 1999, Dunedin, Fla.-based Mintek has helped hundreds of hotels throughout the United States and Canada automate their PM processes.

WinTrack PM software incorporates handheld devices and bar coding to ensure that PMs, rounds, inspections and work orders are accomplished on time. The result: a much more efficient operation.

Bar codes are discreetly placed on every item needing a PM. When an engineer scans a bar code, it prompts him to answer previously determined questions. After the PM has been completed, the bar code is scanned again. Each step is recorded within WinTrack PM.

Mintek's system adds accountability to the PM process because managers know exactly when an engineer was at a location, what was recorded, and how long the engineer was there. WinTrack PM automates PM scheduling and streamlines the work order process. Work orders can be generated automatically through the handheld based on answers provided by engineers. WinTrack PM also tracks parts information for each item needing checked, as well as the costs associated with parts and equipment replacement.

Many different types of reports can be generated from WinTrack PM. Some of these include: PM history reports, inspection result reports, round history reports, open work load reports, parts needed reports, and facility overview. Other types of reports can be created with Mintek's built-in report writer.

WinTrack PM can be used throughout a hotel-not only for expensive equipment but also for guestroom inspections. Meter readings related to energy consumption also can be captured with Mintek's PM system. If a meter reading is out of range, WinTrack PM can generate a warning message. If a PM becomes overdue, it is flagged within WinTrack PM. Mintek's Maintenance Portal centralizes reporting so that work can be monitored from anywhere there is Internet access.

Improved Resource Efficiency

'Any mechanical system running properly is going to use less energy,' says the chief engineer at a leading hotel in Canada currently using WinTrack PM. 'Where there is reduced friction between parts, reduced leakage of steam, and clean filters, there is definitely going to be energy savings.'

'Each part of WinTrack PM ensures that water and energy are saved where they can be saved,' says Lind Hutton, President of Mintek Mobile Data Solutions. 'Without a doubt, a well designed PM program can help maximize resource efficiency, extend the life of valuable equipment, minimize labor and repair costs, and keep guests and staff comfortable and content.'

For 2008, PKF Hospitality Research forecasts utility costs will rise 5.5 percent.

'Those rising costs will make it even more important to perform PMs on a consistent basis,' Hutton says. 'Any hotel currently not doing that is missing a huge opportunity to minimize expenses related to water and energy consumption. There has been a lot of talk lately about green hotels, but without an automated PM system like WinTrack PM, green hotel efficiencies are much more difficult to maintain.'

About Mintek Mobile Data Solutions:



Mintek Mobile Data Solutions is the developer of turn-key solutions for city utilities, lodging and cable companies that provide access to customer, employee and asset information beyond the 'traditional office.' Mintek's solutions have been implemented in more than 1,500 individual locations with more than 5,000 mobile field users. Among Mintek's clients are Plant City, Fla., Time Warner Cable, Comcast, Bright House Communications, Marriott International and Loews Hotels. For more information, call Chris Kluis, Director of Marketing, at (727) 734-9175, or go to: www.mintek.com.

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