

LINEN AND TOWEL RE-USE PROGRAMS

An Important Initiative for Sustainability but Not as Easy as it May Seem

- ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS
 - Guest Participation
 - Housekeeping Participation

LINEN AND TOWEL RE-USE PROGRAMS

- WHAT ENCOURAGES THE BEST GUEST PARTICIPATION?
 - Effectiveness of Message Types
 - Type of Program
 - Opt in programs
 - Opt out programs
 - Guest Incentives
- WHAT IS EFFECTIVE IN GETTING HOUSEKEEPING PARTICIPATION?
 - Training
 - Monitoring
- WHAT ARE POTENTIAL SAVINGS?
 - Reduced labor
 - Reduced energy/water/chemicals
 - Reduced inventory

LINEN AND TOWEL RE-USE PROGRAMS

EFFECTIVENESS OF MESSAGE TYPES

Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration:

Invoking Social Norms: a Social Psychology Perspective on Improving Hotels' Linen-Reuse Programs

Evaluated the Effectiveness of Six Different Messages

1. Help Save the Environment
2. Help Save Resources for Future Generations
3. Partner with Us to Help Save the Environment
4. Help the Hotel Save Energy
5. We are doing our part for the environment, can we count on you
6. 75% of the guests who stayed in this room (#xxx) participated in our new resource savings program by using their towels more than once. You can join your fellow guests in this program to help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay.

<http://www.influenceatwork.com/Media/RBC/Cornell%20Quarterly%20-%20Norms.pdf>

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EFFECTIVENESS OF MESSAGE TYPES

Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration:

Invoking Social Norms: a Social Psychology Perspective on Improving Hotels' Linen-Reuse Programs

Evaluated the Effectiveness of Five Different Messages

- 30% **1. Help Save the Environment**
- 30% **2. Help Save Resources for Future Generations**
- 30% **3. Partner with Us to Help Save the Environment**
- 16% **4. Help the Hotel Save Energy**
- 45% **5. We are doing our part for the environment, can we count on you**
- 47% **6. 75% of the guests who stayed in this room (#xxx) participated in our new resource savings program by using their towels more than once. You can join your fellow guests in this program to help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay."**

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LINEN AND TOWEL RE-USE PROGRAMS

OPT IN or OPT OUT for Linens

Opt In:

The Guest Must Take Some Action to Prevent the Linens from Being Washed

“If you place this card on your bed, we will not wash your linens”

“If you hang this card outside your door, we will not wash your linens”

Opt Out

The Guest Must Take Some Action to Have the Linens Washed

If you want your linens washed, place this card on your bed

If you want your linens washed, hang this card on your door

LINEN AND TOWEL RE-USE PROGRAMS

OPT IN or OPT OUT

OPT IN

30% Cooperation

OPT OUT

70% Cooperation

The above percentages are anecdotal, but consistently reported.

Note, the cooperation percentages for towels in the Cornell study are much lower than anecdotal information for linens. It is reasonable that this is reality. Additionally, the Cornell study was very restrictive on what constituted cooperation. Towels left on door hangers or handles were washed.

LINEN AND TOWEL RE-USE PROGRAMS

- WHAT ENCOURAGES THE BEST GUEST PARTICIPATION?

Make it easy for the Guest

Is there a bar to hang the towels on, or just shelves or the shower rod?

Would you want to reuse this towel???



Even a Highly Motivated Guest is Not Going to be Happy with a Soggy Towel



In this bath room, this was the only place to hang a towel (or the door knob).

This towel will not be dry for the next use.

What if two towels had been used?

Conscientious Housekeepers Will Not Want to Leave this towel.
There should be an easily accessible bar to neatly hang the towels on.



LINEN AND TOWEL RE-USE PROGRAMS

WHAT ENCOURAGES THE BEST GUEST PARTICIPATION?

GUEST INCENTIVES

Starwood's "Make a Green Choice," program gives guests the choice of not only opting out of towel and linen replacement but also all housekeeping for a day.

For each night they participate, guests are given a \$5 gift card to use at any of the hotel's restaurants. Guests also have the option of receiving 500 Starpoints as part of Starwood's loyalty program.

This program is scheduled to run through December, presumably to renew if it is successful. No data on success yet.

LINEN AND TOWEL RE-USE PROGRAMS

SO: WHAT ENCOURAGES THE BEST GUEST PARTICIPATION?

THE MESSAGE

"WE'RE DOING OUR PART FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, CAN WE COUNT ON YOU? Because we are committed to preserving the environment, we have made a financial contribution to a nonprofit environmental protection organization on behalf of the hotel and its guests. If you would like to help us in recovering the expense, while conserving natural resources, please reuse your towels during your stay."

or

"JOIN YOUR FELLOW GUESTS IN HELPING TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT. Almost 75% of guests who are asked to participate in our new resource savings program do help by using their towels more than once. You can join your fellow guests in this program to help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay."

THE PROGRAM

"OPT OUT" IS MORE THAN TWICE AS EFFECTIVE AS "OPT IN"

MAKE IT EASY AND PLEASANT by PROVIDING ADEQUATE HANGERS

"STAY TUNED" FOR UPDATE ON GUEST INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

LINEN AND TOWEL RE-USE PROGRAMS

PARTICIPATION by HOUSEKEEPING IS PARAMOUNT

FOR THE “MECHANICS” TO WORK

TO AVOID GUEST CYNICISM WHEN TOWELS / LINENS ARE REPLACED AFTER
GUEST HAS ASKED FOR NO REPLACEMENT

Encouragement is better than “punishment.”

Get the housekeepers engaged with the hotel’s OVERALL sustainability efforts.

Make sure the purpose and process are clear to them.

Make this part of the training program.

Many hotels have housekeepers sign-off on their training. Make this part of what they sign, **in their language**.

Some use rewards.

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WHAT ENCOURAGES THE BEST HOUSEKEEPING PARTICIPATION?

IT STILL NEEDS TO BE MANAGED

Periodically monitor compliance

If the program requires a door hanger, it is very easy to spot check

Some hotels put a small dot on a corner of the sheet and then check for its presence after the room has been cleaned

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE THE CORE MOTIVATORS

LINEN AND TOWEL RE-USE PROGRAMS

BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Anecdotal: 30% of total laundry costs

Mathematical. Dependent on Cooperation and average days per stay:

Assume 20% cooperation overall and 2.5 day average stay.

Potential savings are $1.5/2.5 = 60\%$ opportunity x 20% compliance = 12% reduction

Or

70% Cooperation and 2.5 day average stay

$1.5/2.5 = 60\%$ opportunity x 70% compliance = 42% reduction

ALL OF THESE REDUCTIONS ARE IN WATER, ENERGY, CHEMICAL AND INVENTORY COST
AND IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT



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THANK YOU