

Going green – managing waste

Q. We have around 200 collections of waste a year, which is a major hassle as, like many city centre hotels, we have to use the same point as that used for deliveries. It also means the back area gets really messy, not to mention smelly, when it's hot. We'd also like to be a bit greener as at present all waste is mixed in together. Any ideas?

'Green at the centre of the City' has the potential to be a successful positioning statement for marketing purposes but only if anchored in a robust corporate social responsibility strategy that includes, and is not limited to, strategic management of waste. Successful implementation is guaranteed to generate positive returns – to both the environment and to the bottom line.

The waste management element of the strategy should be aimed at reducing:

- (a) the amount of waste and
- (b) the volume of waste and
- (c) the number of pickups and
- (d) the smell of waste

Reducing the amount of packaging and waste will come from a radical review of procurement practices. The hotel needs to establish which purchased items are contributing to the mass of packaging and, in co-operation with the suppliers, actively drive down the volume of packaging.

Additionally, the hotel needs to identify the items that are being bought that end up as waste, particularly food items. The goal should be to push management of waste up-stream to the food supplier as far as possible.

Techniques to reduce the volume of waste and packaging stored on site are likely to include assessing the potential role of a compactor to flatten cardboard.

Reducing the number of pick-ups will flow from the above actions and can also be assisted by identifying unused storage space in the hotel in which waste can be stored for longer. Leftover food can be donated to charities supporting the homeless. Such action is likely to remove activity from the receiving bay.

Potentially smelly waste should be stored in a refigerated store.

Further ideas can found from visits to www.ihel.org and www.greenglobe.com and from the team led by Dr Rebecca Hawkins team at the Centre for Environmental Studies in the Hospitality Industry at Oxford Brookes University rjhawkins@brookes.ac.uk

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