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THE RIGHT MOVES

DILIP RAY, OWNER AND CMD OF MAYFAIR
HOTELS & RESORTS HAS THE UNCANNY
KNACK FOR SELECTING THE PERFECT
LOCATION FOR HIS PROPERTIES.

If one thinks about it, laundry is everywhere in a hotel – from bathwear, bed linen, tablecloths, napkins, staff uniforms, guest clothing, and more. And as this volume continues to increase, much care is needed in the upkeep of linen care.

Since laundry is a big department, most hotels devote a dedicated space for it. The logistics are set in place keeping in mind its current scale and future scope of growth.

Explaining how this is designed, Shubhashish Halder, laundry manager, The Leela Mumbai said, “A detailed plan is developed identifying the washing and drying capacity of the machineries that will be installed. Additionally, their quantity and quality (brand and specifications), which depends on the number of rooms the laundry is supposed to operate is also set. Steam boilers for these machineries, preferably a water softening plant, electricity and requisite pipelines for the same, staff with various levels of skills and maintenance knowledge personnel and chemicals and supplies for washing and dry cleaning are put in place.”

Needless to state, water is the most important and basic element in laundry operations. However, the right type of water is needed i.e. water with the parameters in terms of total dissolved solids (TDS), pH and parts per million (PPM), which will reduce the use of chemicals, which eventually increases the linen’s lifespan. In the case of The Leela Mumbai, all water that goes into its machines is treated and checked on a regular basis as per the set parameters.

MANAGING RIGHT

A lot of planning goes into setting up of a laundry starting from steam boilers and the fuel, which is used for steam generation. The energy cost varies with the type of fuel used for this process.

Prominent hotels often follow a well-defined process that involves mapping the machinery’s productivity, maintenance and power consumption before investing in it. Talking about this, Halder said, “It is best to examine specifications such as power consumption in KW, RPM, G factor, inbuilt electric boilers, etc., before buying the machineries. Then comes the chemical/supplies cost, which although a small amount when compared

SPIC AND SPAN

As a division of paramount importance, the laundry solutions department has to maintain a fine balance between providing quality and on-time delivery

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

to heating, lighting and power, also plays an important role in keeping the operational costs at check.”

It is also important to use only good quality chemicals to ensure that the machines are well maintained, a practice that Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center and Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park follows diligently. “We use top notch, quality assured chemicals that minimise the use

of water and electricity. We also run machines on fixed times of the day; this cuts on operational costs to a large extent. In fact, on weekends we only operate on limited machines,” explained Faiz Alam Ansari, complex general manager, Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center and Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park.

Sharing some tips on how the wrong choice of chemical agents can affect the



➔ Removing spots and stains is not an easy task and hence hoteliers need to make the right investments when it comes to laundry solutions.

wash cycle, Monika Yadav, housekeeping manager, Courtyard by Marriott and Fairfield by Marriott, Outer Ring Road, Bengaluru noted that the type of chemical agents used for front load and top load differ. An incorrect choice can lead to multiple wash cycles to clean clothes properly, leading to wastage of water and electricity. "Always load your washing machine optimally as an under loaded washing machine does not mean that it

will consume less electricity. The amount of electricity used is same, even if the washer is not fully loaded or under loaded. Use the right type of cleaning agent for washing clothes," she added.

Sudhir Mishra, laundry manager, The Leela Palace Bangalore added that it is also important for the departmental heads to follow best industry practices to stay cost-efficient. The Leela Palace Bangalore, therefore, replaced its complete



➔ Monika Yadav, housekeeping manager, Courtyard by Marriott and Fairfield by Marriott, Bengaluru.



➔ Payal Joshi, housekeeping manager, Park Hyatt Hyderabad.

conventional lamps into LED, which gave it phenomenal savings in terms of electricity consumption.

"Solar power was installed for hot water generation, where earlier diesel was used and now we have reduced our diesel consumption by 500 liters/day. We installed aerator on all taps, which reduced the litre per minute in each tap from 20 LPM to 8 LPM. We have a daily tracking system to maintain HLP cost," Mishra proudly stated.

BEING EFFICIENT

Removing spots and stains is not an easy task and hoteliers need to make the right investments to ensure the appropriate systems are in place. "We have dedicated wash programmes with certain specifications (wash time, temperature and chemicals) to treat stained linen that comes to 7% to 8% after washing it in a

regular wash process. Similarly, for coloured laundry, we have dedicated wash programmes so that the garments are cleaned without damaging its colour or texture. These methods are quite cost-effective as the chemicals costs are INR 2.3/kg of the load washed," said Halder.

Payal Joshi, housekeeping manager, Park Hyatt Hyderabad added, "We have a separate station specially for sorting out and reviving stained linen. This station offers chemicals for treating different kinds of stains. Coloured laundry is processed



➔ Sudhir Mishra, laundry manager, The Leela Palace Bangalore.

separately, at lower steam levels and the process is programmed based on the level of soiling."

Stained linen is a challenge that every laundry faces daily in its operations. The practice of spotting is followed to deal with stained linens, spotting is just not stain removal but a science in itself and should be looked in that way. Stained items are sorted and kept separately for spotting, a dedicated team and time is allotted for the process of spotting. Spotting utilises different tools like boards, steam guns, different reagents, etc.

"After successful removal of stains the linen is sent for re-washing, a record is maintained for the amount of rewash happening in a month. The fabrics used

in a hotel for uniforms, napkins, etc, must be purchased keeping in view the end use, stain removal properties and longevity. Apart from the regular process of breaking, sudding, emulsification, for coloured linen we use oxygen bleach that are less likely to cause colour loss than chlorine bleaches. Oxygen bleach does not leave any residue on the fabric since the decomposition product of the bleach is water and oxygen," explained Jhingan.

Naturally, hoteliers use a variety of products and solutions to avoid fibre damage and help fabrics last longer. Very often this begins with a stringent fabric selection process and running them through various kinds of internal tests. "We use chemical solutions from John-

A Penny Saved, A Penny Earned

In a hotel's profit and loss statements, the laundry is considered as a cost-centric department rather than one that generates revenue. ROI is calculated based on the revenue earned plus the savings on energy and manpower costs. Rohit Jhingan, sales and marketing director, The Pillazio Hotel, Gurgaon explained, "The laundry department generally earns its revenues through the guest in house, which is a minor part of the operations. From an operation's perspective, this revenue will help in covering only the basic costs. However, ROI in terms of laundry should also be looked at in terms of cost saved vis-à-vis if the service was outsourced, as well as the savings in terms of the increased life of the linen and uniform."



➔ Fabrics used in hotels for uniforms, napkins, etc, must be purchased keeping in view its end use, its stain removal properties and longevity.

son Diversy (parent company Sealed Air) wherein the wash programmes are custom made to suit all fabric types. We use specific wash programme dedicated for a certain type of fabric (depending upon size, colour, texture), which helps us to clean the fabric as well as to protect it from damage,” said Halder.

GOING GREEN

As the laundry department uses plentiful of water, it is important that hoteliers invest in eco-friendly solutions to reduce its wastage. “We use water-based chemicals only and these are from Ecolab. They are eco-friendly and do not have harmful chemicals and are therefore unlikely to damage the fabric. We follow a normal laundry process where the chemical is water-based or Perchloroethylene for dry cleaning fabrics,” said Yadav.

The chemicals solutions used by Leela are from Diversy India’s Clax Xcellence range, which enables the wash programme to use less rinsing cycles thus saving water and energy costs. They are in the process of working out the benefits of Clax Advanced System, which works

at a lower temperature, uses less water in every wash process and drains out easily recyclable water which ultimately leads to lots of HLP and water cost savings. Likewise water discharged by washers from the laundry is sent to the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) where it gets treated and is usually used for watering the landscaped areas.

Joshi averred, “For fabrics to last longer and to avoid fibres from getting damaged, we ensure the water temperatures when washing is as per the required standards, the water’s pH level is maintained and the dosage of solutions/chemicals is as specified for the fabric.”

Since laundry is a significant activity, hoteliers have to ensure they choose suppliers wisely, after a thorough research on their offerings, specifications and authenticity. Ansari explained, “The main criteria for supplier selection is quality assurance with cost effectiveness. We look for suppliers providing high quality products and timely delivery with prompt response.”

Another important aspect is the product’s quality. “This includes the eco-

Tips for efficient laundry operation

- Machines should be well maintained
- They should have periodic servicing schedules
- Only good quality chemicals should be used
- They should be used to their optimum load
- Proper wash schedules should be followed
- Laundry managers should supervise the maximum turnaround of linen to ensure less wastage of time, energy and manpower

friendly nature of the solutions, the wash quality it gives, the amount of water and electricity it consumes during washing, impact on the machines, effect on the strength of the fabric/linen being washed, cost effectiveness and last but not the least, its availability,” said Joshi.

Laundry is certainly a complicated business. However, hotel guests will rarely realise the technology and detailed value engineering that goes into ensuring that every time they put their clothes into the laundry bag, it will reach them the next day, spic and span! 



							
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