

eastern hotelier

FRANCHISE REPORT & DIRECTORY 2013 ENCLOSED! - SEE P.43

www.easternhotelier.com

YOUR HOTEL MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE

SEPT/OCT 2013 / \$9.95

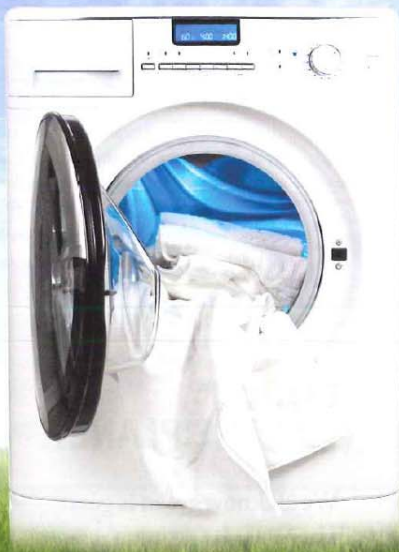
Green Laundry

By Robin Brunet

Courtesy of Shutterstock

All Systems Green

How to boost laundry efficiency without going in the red



In terms of energy efficiency and environmental friendliness, the latest commercial laundry equipment is light years removed from what was considered cutting-edge only a decade ago.

But as any hotelier who is involved in a new build or equipment upgrade keenly appreciates, the technology doesn't come cheap.

However, in Ontario at least, the overall push to 'go green' has resulted in that province's two utility companies, Union Gas and Enbridge, offering incentive programs for everything from ozone systems to high speed extraction washers. "In some cases the rebates can be in the thousands of dollars and pay for a fair percentage of the hotelier's investment," says Rob Carter, technical representative for Harco Co. Ltd. "The incentives available in Eastern Canada are important, because although the best cleaning technology reduces utility bills, labour costs and preserves linens longer, too many hoteliers are still put off by the initial cost outlay."

As far as Frank Guido, president of Automated Laundry Systems, is concerned, establishing a proper dedicated laundry space is the first step to take. "You have to get over the fact that the laundry department isn't a profit centre and allow generous space for the machines," he says. "And yes, something like a washer that removes a lot of waste water via high-speed extraction

may cost several thousand dollars more than a standard unit — but the payback in energy savings can be less than two years.”

Warren Gibson, national sales manager for Ontario Laundry Systems Inc., agrees. “The latest washers use half the water that same-sized washers used 10 years ago, which in green terms means less waste and detergent going into the sewers,” he says. “Plus, companies like Electrolux have come out with automatic weighing systems that assess the amount of linen in the machine and adjust the water level accordingly, resulting in even less water usage.”

Solutions are also available for the age-old problem of operator error. Gibson notes, “Now that you need far less water to wash clothes, there’s still the likelihood of using

too much chemicals for a wash: but Electrolux has solved this problem with a system that analyses the load and pumps in the proper amount of chemicals. Again,



The EcoTex Ozone Laundry System from Coinamatic is effective in killing common and harmful bacteria found in dirty laundry when compared to conventional hot water cycles.



it’s a cost savings to the hotel and a benefit to the environment.”

Don Beesley, commercial sales manager for Midland Appliance, uses data culled from Maytag to show hoteliers exactly where their laundry money is going. “The capital cost of equipment is only 10 per cent of the total laundry dollar whereas labour accounts for between 45 and 50 per cent,” he says. “The efficiency of the latest Maytag appliances will reduce the latter percentage enormously.”

Kory Orchard, sales manager for East Coast Laundry Systems, suggests that once an hotelier decides to invest in new equipment, he or she should select the appropriate size of equipment: “The common assump-

Automated Laundry Systems knows that establishing the proper dedicated space for laundry is the first step.

tion is to buy huge washers because they’ll do huge loads all at once and save money, but this often leads to the undesirable scenario of the washers running half-empty, which neither saves money nor helps the environment. Avoiding such mistakes is as simple as consulting professionals like me.”

To which Beesley adds, “If a hotel has 100 pounds of wash we would never sell the owner a 100 pound machine. Instead, we would sell two 55-pound machines: that way if one breaks down you have a back-up, and when things aren’t so busy you only need to operate one machine.”

What if actual ownership of the latest laundry technology is neither feasible nor desirable? That’s where the Coinamatic

Group of Companies comes in. Coinamatic's Total Care Program offers the benefits of a complete laundry operation solution with no initial capital investment required. "We handle the maintenance and servicing of the equipment for a fixed low monthly rate," explains Susan Reynolds, director, marketing. "Total Care also offers hoteliers the opportunity to upgrade equipment as technology advances or as their laundry needs evolve. This approach to developing a laundry solution effectively bypasses the problem of being stuck owning equipment that could last 20 years. Because let's face it: as utility costs climb, machines are going to get better and better."

Coinamatic is one of a growing number of equipment and chemical providers that offer ozone as a means of improving laundry efficiency. Its EcoTex Ozone Laundry System, for example, has been proven by the Gelda Scientific, and Industrial Development

Corporation (a lab testing facility) to be effective in killing common and harmful bacteria found in dirty laundry compared to conventional hot water cycles.

Haddon Equipment & Supplies recently entered the ozone market by selling the Aquawing Ozone Injection System (whose benefits include automatically controlling the amount of ozone that is injected into every wash); Haddon Owner/General Manager Charles Reid points out that Aquawing works particularly well with his X3 solid laundry detergent.

Rob Carter explains the biggest benefit of ozone: "When chlorine is used to disinfect, hot water is required because chlorine is slow to react at colder temperatures. But with an ozone system you can reduce temperatures to 70 C, instead of the typical 140°C to 160°C. This can

significantly reduce energy costs by cutting hot water usage by up to 90 per cent."

There are other ways to improve laundry



East Coast Laundry Systems recommends choosing the appropriate size of equipment for the hotel, and not just assuming that bigger equals better.



Monte Carlo Inns are outfitted with top-quality washers and dryers.

efficiency and be environmentally responsible without having to commit to capital outlay. Justin Meffe, director of operations for Monte Carlo Inns, recently gave guests in all of his eight Ontario hotel properties the option not to have their sheets and towels cleaned daily. "In a lot of cases it's not necessary. The housekeepers simply come in and fold the sheets or leave the towels hanging to dry — and this amounts to a huge savings in electricity, water and chemicals."

Although the Monte Carlo properties are outfitted with top-quality washers and dryers, Meffe has instituted a policy whereby washers must be 80 per cent full in order to operate. "We also have automatic chemical dispensers to avoid human error. These are small touches that cumulatively save considerable money and help protect our linen investment."

Similarly, many of the franchisees of the over 300 Choice Hotels in Canada offer guests the option not to have their linens cleaned daily. "It's not yet an official program, but we're explaining to guests that less laundry is beneficial to the environment, and they're responding positively," says Brendan Gibley, director of franchise operations for Choice Hotels Canada.

Seth Willer, regional sales manager for Continental Girbau Inc., has parting tips on how to improve existing laundry systems. "Make sure your programs are set correctly, and work with your chemical supplier to make sure those programs are appropriate for the load volumes you handle," he says. "Basic preventative maintenance should also be followed, especially for dryers: clean the lint in the traps and behind the panels, and make sure the ductwork is clear."

Even though investing in new machinery may be daunting, creating an efficient green laundry system will likely pay for itself within a few years. It will also extend the life of a hotel's linen inventory and, in some cases, even reduce labour costs. ●