



Chain Hotels Take Green Lead in Hospitality Industry

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A study by Stefani Svaren, a student at the School of Hospitality Business Management, Pullman, Wash., found that major chain hotels such as Hyatt, Marriott, Hilton and others are far ahead of independent hotels when it comes to adopting green and sustainable operating practices.

Svaren's study, which was published in a recent issue of the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, found that chains are more likely to use energy-efficient lighting and water-saving bathroom fixtures, as well as environmentally preferable cleaning products.¹

The study concluded that some independent hotels are so far behind chains that they may lose their competitive advantage in drawing customers.

"This is because on both a corporate level and a personal level, if costs and features are competitive, more travelers prefer to stay in a green hotel," says Mike Sawchuk, vice president of Enviro-Solutions, manufacturer of green cleaning chemicals and products, which markets to hotels throughout North America.

Hotels first started taking steps to be greener and more sustainable in the 1990s, and some, once again the big chains, soon realized it could be a cost savings as well as a powerful marketing strategy.

"Some independent hotels, for instance, are reluctant to switch to energy-efficient light bulbs because it can take years for them to see a return on their investment," explains Sawchuk. "However, a large chain may discover cost savings almost immediately."

The use of green cleaning chemicals is also quite common in the larger chains, according to Sawchuk. "And many of the [chains] we work with are quick to add this fact to their marketing material. [They find] consumers believe a green hotel is also a better operated hotel."

¹Imran Rahman, Dennis Reynolds, Stefani Svaren. How 'green' are North American hotels? An exploration of low-cost adoption practices. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 2011; DOI: [10.1016/j.ijhm.2011.09.008](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2011.09.008)