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Green Supply Chain Management in Hotel Azure: A Case in Sustainability

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Abstract

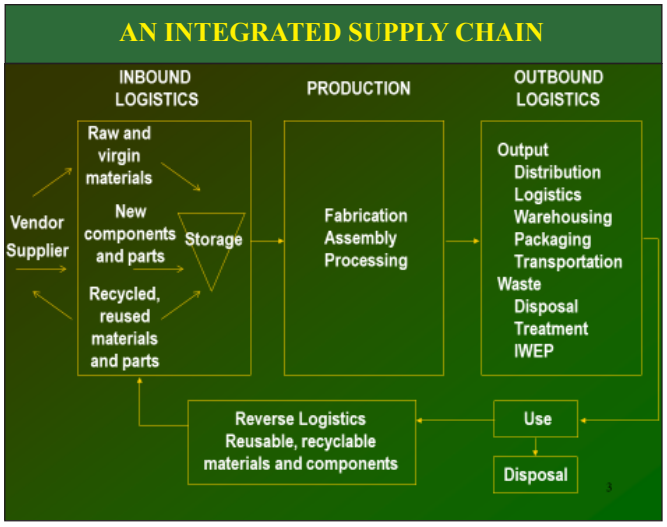
This paper is a real life case study describing how a much celebrated resort Hotel having a beautiful ocean front adopted environmental initiatives at every stage of its supply chain. The initiatives started with their own operations first. Thereafter, the Hotel considered its inbound logistics part of the supply chain as well as the outbound part of the supply chain and worked with suppliers, waste handlers and other business partners to green these stages too. The case describes many details of the action plans incorporated by the Hotel in its process of greening all operations. Because it is in the case study format emphasis has been given to describe exact procedures of greening the supply chain. It is the objective of the case writer to inspire players in the Hotel and Hospitality industry to adopt green supply chain initiatives into their supply chain and contribute towards the sustainability of the region.

Keywords: Green Supply Chain Management, Hotel Industry, Sustainability

Relevance of Green Supply Chain in the Industry Today

In today's world, many business organizations have woken up to the increasing relevance of sustainable development. Many companies have adopted environmental initiatives as an integral part of their operations, incorporating innovative concepts such as environmental sustainability, responsible purchasing and manufacturing, triple bottom line, better compliance to national and international environmental standards, environment friendly waste management, and so on, into their overall company strategy (Hsu, et al., 2013; Bacallan, 2000; Rao & Kondo, 2010). These organizations have also realized that if sustainability has to be achieved, the green initiative has to encompass the entire stretch of the operations of a company, and include suppliers, customers, waste handlers, and other business partners in the process (Cervera & Flores, 2012; Sharma, Rajan, Jose & Rao, 2015). Thus, the green supply chain approach is incorporated where companies need to identify environmental aspects at every stage, encompassing all suppliers' operations and those of other business partners, assess the environmental impacts associated with the aspects, and design action plans to mitigate the adverse effects on the environment if any. This initiative, thus, involves a framework where the company would need to consider the inbound logistics phase of the supply chain, production or internal supply chain, outbound logistics phase, and reverse logistics phase (Rao, 2002; Rao & Holt, 2005; Rao, 2007; Sarkis, 1999; Seuring & Muller, 2007).

The strategic framework for green supply chain management has proved to be a very effective roadmap followed by multitudes of companies in different countries all over the world. For many of them, especially for larger companies, such initiatives have helped them achieve environmental performance (Rao, 2002, Bacallan, 2000), enhanced brand image and social standing, as well as economic performance and competitiveness (Sharma et al., 2015; Rao & Holt, 2005). In addition to companies achieving their individual benefits, our natural environment has clearly been a predominant beneficiary because the framework of green supply chain management involves and makes 'green' a host of small, medium, and large companies all along the supply chain, and leads to nothing less than clearly contributing to making 'green' industries in the region. This makes the green supply chain management framework a very important requirement in any region, anywhere in the world (Cervera & Flores, 2012; Sharma, Rajan, Jose & Rao, 2015).



Source: Sarkis (1999)

In a subsequent section we discuss the case of Hotel Azure, where this idyllic resort and hotel implemented green supply chain management in its operations. Usually one hears about green supply chain in manufacturing set-ups. All the same, service organizations too, like hotels & resorts, hospitals, BPO units and even educational institutions can very well incorporate this framework and contribute towards greening of industry (Rao, Pulupudi & Sen, 2017).

The logic behind adopting green supply chain management is that Hotel Azure realized that in addition to making its own operations proactively environmental friendly, it could contribute to making the rest of the industry green by inspiring the suppliers, waste handlers, and other service providers to be environmentally friendly. To achieve this objective, the hotel decided to adopt the Green Supply Chain Management Framework to help provide a workable roadmap (Seuring, 2001, Sarkis, 2012).

Features of Green Supply Chain

In general, the green supply chain management has the following features:

Making the Inbound Logistics Green

Making materials in Inbound green:

(a) Using green materials by:

- Requiring the supplier to provide only environment friendly materials.
- Requiring suppliers to stop providing environmentally questionable materials.
- Reducing items that are difficult to dispose of after use.
- Reducing the use of virgin materials by sourcing and using more recycled, reused, and recyclable materials (Sarkis, 2001; Rao & Kondo, 2010; Simpson, et al., 2007).

(b) Greening suppliers in Inbound logistics:

- Selecting suppliers by environmental criteria
- Requiring suppliers to specify environmental impacts of the product content
- Requiring that the products that are supplied must have green attributes
- Specifying that the products must not contain environmentally hazardous attributes
- Requiring suppliers to provide information (MSDS) about their environmental aspects (MSDS = material safety data sheet) (Rao & Kondo, 2010).

Making the Production Process Green by:

- Using environmentally friendly raw materials in production.
- Substituting environmentally questionable materials.
- Always taking environmental criteria into consideration during production.
- Using clean fuel, renewable energy, solar energy, and so on in production.
- Encouraging environmental design considerations.
- Optimizing process to reduce solid and liquid waste, and emissions.
- Internal recycling of materials within the production phase.

Making the Outbound Logistics Green

- Environmentally friendly waste management.
- Environmental improvement of packaging.
- Taking back packaging.
- Eco-labelling and communicating to customer.

- Recovery of company's end-of-life products.
- Providing customer with information on environment-friendly products and/or production methods.
- Use of environmentally friendly transportation (Sarkis, 2001, Seuring, 2001).

Green Supply Chain in the Tourism Industry: A Brief Literature Review

Green Supply Chain Management, or GSCM in the manufacturing industry has all along attracted widespread research in academia over the past few decades. Contrastingly, studies of GSCM in the service industry have been very few in number (Zhang, Song & Huang, 2008; Hong, Kwon & Roh, 2009). Recently, most researchers have focused on how to incorporate sustainability in supply chain management so as to improve the performance of the manufacturing industry (Zhu, Geng, Fujita & Hashimoto, 2010; Lee, Kim & Choi, 2012; Rao & Holt, 2005). Indeed, very few research is available on green supply chain contribution toward achieving better performance in the service industry. However, there is tremendous relevance in incorporating sustainability in the supply chain process of the service industry (Kamal & Fernando, 2015).

Walker et al. (2014) consider sustainable OM (Operations Management) as the implementation of social, economic, and environmental objectives into the operations of an individual firm and operational linkages that go beyond the firm to include the supply chain and communities. They have explored how the existing literature has considered sustainability initiatives on all phases of supply chains. However, in their work as well, one does not come across research on supply chains in the services sector.

Zhang et al. (2009) have reviewed existing literature on green supply chain management in the context of tourism. They acknowledge that studies on green supply chain in the tourism context are much fewer compared to ones in the manufacturing sector. They consider the benefit of looking at not only the individual enterprises but the entire value chain in tourism. Their research examines all characteristics of tourism products, and brings out the drivers, challenges, and core issues in tourism supply chains (TSCs) as well as in tourism supply chain management (TSCM). This research also provides a systematic review of available tourism studies from the supply chain perspective, and proposes a framework for TSCM research in this new and exciting field. This framework, they expect, would also be of importance to tourism and hospitality decision makers.

Again, Song (2012) recognizes that supply chain management, though so needed and relevant in the tourism industry, is rather rare in the existing literature. In the past few decades, the tourism industry has evolved and modernized in a considerable manner. This has also promoted implementation of supply chain management among organizations constituting the industry. Song believes that in view of the tourism industry becoming fiercely competitive, adoption of supply chain linking all business partners rather than single tourism entities would certainly help in achieving a competitive advantage. However, the sustainability aspect or 'green' initiative encompassing the tourism supply chain does not feature in a significant way.

Tigu and Călăreţu (2013) consider supply chain management in the tourism industry with an emphasis on a hotel chain in Romania. They observed that the supply chain in tourism involves multiple participants, such as tourism services suppliers, tour-operators and reselling travel agencies, and most importantly, hotel guests or clients. In order to enhance customer satisfaction, Tigu and Călăreţu observed that hotels strive to attain objectives which include excellence in services, high ROI, reduced demand uncertainty, and also environmental sustainability in their supply chain. However, the sustainability aspect is not held in high priority.

Michailidou et al. (2016) looked upon the tourism industry as one of the most dynamic and far reaching sectors in the world today. In this industry there are many complex and inter-related activities which constitute efficient development of tourism. These activities comprise economic, environmental, social, cultural, and political dimensions in the overall supply chain. Although it does play a key role in the development of economic progress in the region, tourism contributes toward environmental degradation, especially in the popular tourism centers, and also in climate change. Their research presents a framework to estimate the environmental footprints of each link in the tourism supply chain framework based on lifecycle impact assessment theory. To demonstrate the applicability of this framework, they considered two large sea-side hotels in Greece. The framework was applied with the help of a questionnaire and LCA (Life Cycle Analysis Software) SimaPro 8 software.

Hotel activities are highly inter-related with other businesses, which provides a unique opportunity to encourage their partners to help them attain their environmental mission too (Lakshmi, 2002). Whenever hotels manage and operate their activities of serving their guests, Michailidou says they should focus on several aspects, such as logistics management, inventory management, information technology, procurement

and distribution, and lean and green supply chain practices. This would help not only to reduce their own environmental footprints but also contribute to making the region 'green'.

Amemba (2013), considers green supply chain best practices in the Kenyan hospitality industry. The author looks at how the hospitality industry in Kenya is implementing environmental procurement, design for environment, environmentally friendly operations, cleaner production, and environmental waste management as best practices. Amemba observes that in Kenya Green Supply Chain Management is getting popular mainly because of escalating deterioration of the environment. For instance, there is a diminishing supply of raw material resources, waste sites are overflowing, and the level of pollution generated from waste sites is ever increasing. However, the companies are also realizing that in the process of being environment friendly, green supply chain is making good business sense, even leading to higher profits. In fact, it is a business value driver and not a cost center.

In the research, Amemba explores how the green supply chain management elements, such as green procurement, green manufacturing, green operations and reverse logistics, and finally, waste management, lead to the implementation of the best practices which constitute GSCM.

Amemba's research brings out the following best practices as implanted by hotels in Kenya.

Best Practices in Green Procurement

- Using low-energy bulbs and solar energy for lighting of entire campus.
- Using solar energy wherever possible.
- Using solar water heaters and solar-powered communication systems.
- Procurement of environment-friendly charcoal briquettes for cooking.
- Procurement of eco-friendly detergents.
- Rainwater harvesting and storage.
- Using roof catchments to enhance water supply.
- The hotels return all the non-recyclable glass waste to central glass industries for remanufacturing.
- Most of the food and vegetables are grown in the hotel campus using organic gardening methods.
- Rainwater is harvested for use during cleaning.
- The hotels have made extensive use of solar energy.
- Procure biodegradable soaps and detergents all the time.

Green Design Best Practices in the Hospitality Industry in Kenya

- Clean and well-fenced garbage disposal and composting areas are present.
- Dry toilets and dual flush toilets are used for water efficiency.
- Minimum use of the generator, with excess power being stored in batteries to be discharged later.
- A water meter is fixed in every unit to monitor water usage.
- Water-efficient shower heads have been installed.
- Charcoal briquettes are used to heat water.
- Piping is extended into designated "cooking huts" within the village, which will make use of biogas for cooking and heating.

Green Operations and Reverse Logistics Best Practices in the Hospitality Industry in Kenya

- Using bucket showers to conserve water.
- Wastewater or grey water is recycled and reused for gardening.
- Laundry is not carried out every day, unless demanded.
- Hotels consolidate laundry to conserve water.
- Energy consumption and water consumption is continuously monitored.

Green Manufacturing Best Practices in the Hospitality Industry in Kenya

- Charcoal briquettes are used for cooking.
- The hotels use solar energy for cooking.
- The hotels practice energy efficiency – using the generator to a minimum, with excess power being stored in batteries to be discharged later.
- Use of solar energy in cooking; use of char dust for heating water.
- Water is heated by solar-powered heaters both for cooking and cleaning.

Waste Management Best Practices in the Hospitality Industry in Kenya

- Organic waste is composted within the hotel campus and given to a licensed waste handler.
- Hotels practice garbage separation and composting.
- Clean and well-fenced garbage disposal and composting areas are present.
- Grey water from every part of the hotel is collected and re-used to water plants in the garden.
- A three-chamber composting system to manage kitchen wastes is used; all garbage is separated before disposal.
- Effective microorganisms in septic tanks to break down wastes are used.
- Reed bed system is used as part of their wastewater management.
- The hotels return all the non-recyclable glass waste to central glass industries, and waste oil is sent for recycling; non-biodegradable packaging is sent back for recycling.
- Wastes are segregated before disposal; organic wastes are composted.
- Wetland system is constructed to manage wastewater.
- Regular testing of effluent is always carried out, using inspection and collecting drains; there is an elaborate solid waste handling system based on 3 R – Reduce-Reuse-Recycle.
- Organic food waste is composted in a scavenger-proof site, and applied as manure in the kitchen garden.
- Metallic wastes (e.g. cans) are taken for recycling; whereas tins from paint are returned to the manufacturer and waste oil is donated to staff for use in the domestic kitchen.

Taking a note that research is not that abundant in the sustainable supply chain management in the tourism industry, in the following sections the case of Hotel Azure is presented. We believe that for hotels and other entities in the tourism industry, both the concept of supply chain management and sustainability are extremely relevant, and they lead to the achievement of a competitive advantage in a big way, in addition to ensuring that the industry is 'green'.

Hotel Azure and Green Supply Chain Management

Hotel Azure was established about 40 years ago on the golden coastline bordering the blue waters of the ocean. It has brought tourists from all over the world through the ages. The coastline was studded with coconut trees and mountains which gave it an idyllic charm. Originally discovered by pirates in the 16th century this region was converted into a bustling tourism and trading center. With many foreigners visiting the place and several historic events taking place in the surrounding region, the locality became a melting pot of fascinating cultures, religion, and food. This, combined with the tranquility of the seas, provided a perfect backdrop for Hotel Azure.

When it started, the hotel had only two blocks and less than 200 rooms. In 30 years it has grown to more than 500 rooms, 16 conference halls, and several specially decorated suites. With the tremendous growth in the hotel's size, the number of customers, and volume of business over the years, Hotel Azure received many awards and recognition from different national agencies for best in location, best in food services, and best in landscape competition. All these awards and recognition showed that Hotel Azure's search for excellence in service, quality, and customer satisfaction was in existence all along. From quality service, the hotel now sought to achieve proactive environmental management, as shown by its interest in sustainability and environmental preservation.

How Hotel Azure Started the Green Supply Chain Roadmap

Hotel Azure wanted to start the process by first focusing on the production phase of its own operations.

Production or Internal Logistics Phase

First, the environmental 'aspects and impacts' related to all company operations and activities were identified. The process was in line with the ISO 14001 system of environmental standards. Aspects include the hotel's activities, services, or products (which, incidentally, is the hotel service provided to the customers), which impact the environment. An environmental impact is a change to the environment caused by environmental aspects. For example, when a hotel carries out a cleaning activity, the environmental aspect is the cleaning agent in

the wastewater, and water itself, because it is a depleting natural resource. The environmental impact is potential water pollution. Another example is when the hotel provides hot water for the bathrooms; the environmental aspect comprises emissions from the boiler. The associated impact will be air pollution.

At Hotel Azure, a steering committee was created, comprising people who identified all the environmental aspects and the associated impacts by means of a walk-through survey. Some of the aspects identified were:

Environmental Aspects

- Use of toxic chemicals in cleaning activities, which is huge in a large hotel set up.
- Generation of solid and liquid waste, from kitchen activities and cleaning activities; also from a large amount of packaging used for all raw materials which are sourced.
- Producing emissions in the air, from boilers, refrigerators, air-conditioning, cooking ovens. and other equipment.
- Use of fossil fuels like coal, LPG, oils.
- Use of electricity, water, and other materials.
- Generation of toxic wastes.
- Use of land and other natural resources.
- Providing kitchen services with ingredients which are environment friendly, such as organically grown farm vegetables, coffee and tea, meats, and so on; as much as possible, fresh fish was served straight from the ocean.

Associated Impacts of these Aspects

- Pollution of air.
- Land contamination, land degradation.
- Water contamination.
- Rise of sea-level.
- Health hazard, prevalence of disease.
- Global warming, acid rain, ozone layer depletion.
- Lack of conservation of natural resources like materials, water, electricity, and land.

https://advisera.com/14001academy/knowledgebase/4-steps-in-identification-and-evaluation-of-environmental-aspects/

The Hotel also wanted to arrive at a priority score for each aspect so that action can be taken on aspects which are a priority. For this, each aspect has a severity rating and a likelihood rating. The score was the product of the severity rating and likelihood rating. The more severe the impact and more likely in frequency the aspect, the higher was the score.

The action plans were drawn up to address the aspects having higher scores.

Environmental Programs and Action Plans

Use of electricity, water, and other materials were found to have a high score. So, the hotel drew up action plans to address the aspect of using electricity, water, and so on.

Action Plan to Address Electricity use and Incorporate Conservation

- Use plants on the flat roofs of cottages to keep temperature down so there is less need for air-conditioning.
- Use solar panels on the sloping roofs to generate electricity as well as for solar water heating.
- All lighting posts on the beach line to be powered by solar panels.
- Use of natural lighting wherever possible.
- Train all employees to conserve electricity.

In addition, the hotel planned to set up a bio-gas plant to generate clean electricity using kitchen waste.

Action Plan to Address Water use and Incorporate Conservation

- Recycling water from kitchen, laundry, and housekeeping: The wastewater is first led into a biological wastewater treatment plant, and then to a mechanical wastewater treatment plant. The clean water coming from these plants is led into clarifying ponds where freshwater fish abounds. This water is then used to water the garden plants along the beach and also used in toilets.
- Cleaning of flooring is first carried out on a dry cleaning basis. Water is used only after dry cleaning is complete.
- Cleaning of vegetables, crockery, and so on, is first carried out in a large tub, then with running water.
- Clients are requested to help conserve water by closing taps when not in use.
- Employees are given training to use water conservation techniques in all activities.
- Control charts are set up to monitor water use continuously.

Action Plan to Reduce Hazardous Chemical use

Hotel Azure identified various environmentally hazardous elements in the cleaning agents and so on, which were found to be in enormous use in the laundry and to keep the hotel clean. These items were replaced by environmentally friendly items and only those cleaning agents which did not cause any environmental burden were used.

Auto dispensers were fitted in the laundry machine, dish washing machines, and cleaning stores. This would prevent the danger of chemical leaks.

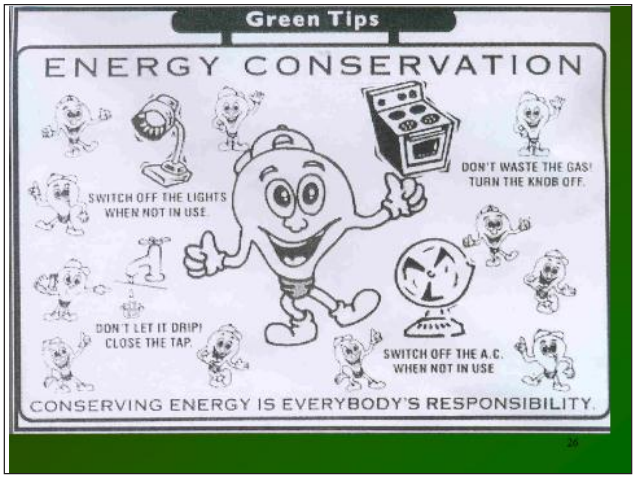
Chemical sprays were to be replaced by water jets to dissolve oil and grease in the kitchen.

Action plans to educate employees to reduce consumption of electricity, water, and other materials were made.

When shopping, employees were advised to use reusable bags.

Using Internal Communication

The hotel put up posters on different walls of its public areas to remind employees and customers about the environment endeavors of the organization.



(Source: Rao, 2001a)

Greening the Inbound Logistics Phase at Hotel Azure

Green Sourcing

Green materials were used throughout the supply chain.

Earlier, Hotel Azure was using several toxic and hazardous items such as could be found in bleaches, cleansers, disinfectants, insecticides, highly inflammable dry-cleaning chemicals, and toilet and drain cleaners. These were replaced by items which contain environmentally friendly components.

Solvents, acids, oils and greases, paints, pesticides, and adhesives were all sourced in an environment friendly form.

Refrigerators containing CFCs were replaced by refrigerators containing Ammonia.

Asbestos roofing generates dust and health hazards. The hotel, therefore stopped using asbestos sheets and instead asked suppliers to deliver modern non-dust roofs.

PCB-free transformers and capacitors were sourced, which do not emit dioxin gas.

All suppliers were asked to supply items having:

- A large volume of recycled and recyclable items.
- Reusable items.
- items which can be easily disposed off.
- environment friendly components.

Also, all suppliers were asked to provide MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet), detailing the exact volume of hazardous components, if any, and emergency procedures listed, in case of a spill or leak.

Making the Suppliers go Green

Hotel Azure introduced a detailed program for suppliers and other business partners to make them environment friendly.

Holding Environment Awareness Seminars and Workshops for Suppliers

With this initiative Hotel Azure periodically invited all its suppliers to come together and listen to a panel of speakers talking about:

- Air pollution caused by emissions from various manufacturing and service processes.
- Water pollution caused by discharge of wastewater which sometimes contains environmentally hazardous substances, into rivers, lakes, and other water bodies.
- Land contaminations caused by landfills, leakages of chemicals, and toxic output.
- Global warming and other climate change problems due to the generation of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and so on, upon burning fossil fuels.
- Ozone layer depletion on account of CFC use.
- Waste management related problems.
- Land contamination caused by the use of plastic, and so on.

Thereafter, the hotel assured the suppliers that their environmental team would actively participate to help suppliers address and overcome their specific environmental concerns.

Informing Suppliers about the Benefits of Environment Friendly Production Systems

Hotel Azure made it a point to always stress two kinds of benefits upon adopting environment friendly procedures.

In the first place, the hotel emphasized the need for the industry to go green, and explained how the suppliers would help relieve the environmental burden in the region. This could be achieved if the suppliers carried out waste management properly, so that there is no toxic emission released to the atmosphere, no toxic wastewater is emptied into the water bodies, there is no land contamination, and so on.

Secondly, Hotel Azure also informed the suppliers that all over the world organizations were becoming more and more conscious of sustainability. Of course, these organizations were conscious of the necessity of their own production process being environmentally sustainable. In addition, however, they also wanted their entire supply chain to go green. They were deciding more and more that they would only do business with suppliers who were 'green'.

Hotel Azure explained to the suppliers that they can remain in business and stay competitive only if they become and remain green. Hence, their sustainability efforts would make perfect business sense.

Supplier Rating System According to Environmental Criteria

Hotel Azure developed a supplier rating system broadly under the following criteria:

- Hotel Azure first asked the supplier to check if they have:
  - Industrial wastewater discharge.
  - Hazardous waste storage.
  - Hazardous waste treatment.
  - Use/storage of hazardous materials.
  - Air emissions.

If any of these are present and the supplier monitors and controls them, then they get a high score.

Otherwise, the supplier gets a low score. If these items are not present, then the supplier gets a high score.

- Hotel Azure asked the supplier if their facility treats industrial wastewater prior to discharge. If yes, the

supplier gets a high score, otherwise a low score.

- Hotel Azure asked the supplier if their facility has air emissions. If yes, whether it controls and treats the emissions prior to discharge. If yes, the supplier gets a high score, otherwise a low score.

In this manner, for every item applicable to suppliers, the hotel enquires and monitors the environmental initiatives taken up by the supplier; for each such item the supplier is scored. These scores are added up to generate an overall score. Only if the score is high the supplier is retained by the hotel. Otherwise, the supplier is replaced.

Greening the Outbound Logistics Phase at Hotel Azure

Hotel Azure adopted various strategies to make its outward logistics 'green'.

- Green marketing
- Environment-friendly waste management
- Environment-friendly transportation
- Green labeling

Green Marketing

This strategy dealt with how the hotel played a proactive role in delivering a service which was sustainable in a very significant way. The hotel took extreme care to make every operation as totally environment-friendly as possible, such as cleaning aspects, where environmentally questionable products were substituted with sustainable ones; kitchen and food providing services, where organically grown vegetables, meats, coffee, and other food materials were used, along with fresh fish from the ocean, as much as possible; keeping the seafront devoid of garbage, and so on.

In addition, the hotel went out of its way to communicate to all its customers and potential customers, including other hotels and resorts in the nearby region, regarding the sustainability initiative they adopted. They did this to educate other players in the market and inspire the market as a whole to contribute to making the industry 'green'. Green marketing also helped to satisfy an implicit need in the customer to go to a resort which is totally free of toxicity, emissions and hazardous material. The customers said that they loved to go to a resort for rest and rejuvenation, where there is no CFC, no PCBs, and no plastic waste lying around, and the environment nourishes the health.

Environment-friendly Waste Management

Before the green initiatives started at Hotel Azure, the hotel generated toxic solid as well as liquid waste. Waste handlers were given the responsibility of addressing this problem. They would pick up the toxic waste and treat it to remove the toxicity. Usually, such waste, after neutralization, would be put in landfills. The liquid waste would be discharged in water bodies.

However, nobody made the effort to monitor how the waste handlers were treating the waste.

Once the green initiatives started, the hotel appointed a steering committee to keep track of the waste and monitor how it was being treated.

The hotel also set up a waste treatment plant inside the campus where all liquid waste would accumulate. In any case, because the cleaning agents were environment-friendly, the waste was not toxic. However, all liquid waste was led to the wastewater treatment plant to undergo neutralization. Only the leftover solid sludge was given to the waste handlers for dumping in the landfill.

Environment-friendly Transportation

The hotel had a large amount of transportation services associated with its operations involving vehicles bringing in hotel guests, vehicles transporting hotel guests after their stay, huge volumes of incoming materials such as vegetables, meats and fish, other food ingredients, cooking supplements, cleaning items, stationery, linens, towels, tablecloths, packaging, and so on. The suppliers were asked to use vehicles with emission-free engines for transportation. But for the vehicles used by the hotel guests, a different set up was devised.

All vehicles used by guests were stopped at a very comfortable and attractive pavilion close to the main hotel. The incoming guests alighted there, were served drinks, and then they were brought to the main building by hotel-owned golf carts which were run by electricity.

The same was done for outgoing guests, with the golf carts bringing the guests to the pavilion where taxis and vehicles would be waiting to transport them.

Reaching Greener Heights and Educating the Hotel Industry

The environmental initiatives carried out by Hotel Azure, in the form of a green supply chain management, has come a long way from what the hotel envisaged when they started.

Initially, their endeavor was to provide a totally clean, green, and healthy environment for the hotel guests, where they could come to rejuvenate. This was achieved in a very significant way, as observed by the customer satisfaction surveys periodically run by the management.

However, what the hotel did not foresee in the beginning was that the regional media picked up these efforts and communicated them through the local magazines, industry journals, and the television. The publicity given was on such a grand scale that other hotels in the region sent management teams to observe and study how Hotel Azure was carrying out their sustainability drive so effectively. In the tourism industry word-of-mouth really works wonders. So, when satisfied customers went back home they talked about the hotel to their friends, who in turn talked to their friends, and so on. There was a snow balling effect, which led Hotel Azure to slowly become famous.

Researchers, studying the sustainability initiatives in the industry, came and wrote case articles on Hotel Azure. These cases were then discussed in the classrooms of business schools, which inspired future managers. The national award for eco-friendliness followed, which brought job satisfaction and pride to the hotel staff. The process went on and still continues. They are now called to talk about their initiatives at conventions and seminars. They also regularly reach out to other hotels and help them implement their own initiatives too.

The process is ongoing, never stopping, and the hotel continues to be an industry leader, believing in building a greener world for the region and beyond.

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