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This former teacher learned valuable lessons as he worked his way up the hospitality ladder. See how early struggles and a knack for leadership forged the relationships that helped him thrive when he started his own hotel company.



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7 ways to get the most from your onsite laundry operation

BY DAVID W. HEATH
HM COLUMNIST

Your hotel laundry can be a great asset for servicing your guestrooms quickly and controlling your inventory of linens and terry. It also can be troublesome, expensive and a drain on productivity. Here are some tips we've picked up over

the years for getting the most from your hotel's laundry.

1 Take care of the equipment.

Downtime in your laundry is expensive in terms of wasted labor and guest satisfaction. When the laundry can't produce, room attendants can't complete their rooms, the front desk can't check guests into

clean rooms and you've got a mess on your hands. Consistent and effective equipment preventive maintenance by a qualified laundry mechanic is essential to keeping your laundry up and running.

2 Weighing in.

Your commercial washers are designed to operate at their

rated capacities. Over- and under-loading throws the machine out of balance and causes excess vibration and damage to internal bearings. Make sure your laundry has a working scale and that your team consistently weighs every load and fills every load to the machine's rated capacity.

3 It's all about the ironer.

The most expensive and most important piece of equipment in your full-service hotel's laundry is the flatwork ironer. Keeping your ironer in good shape is key to getting optimal productivity from your hotel's laundry crew.

4 Rollers, temperatures and speeds.

Worn ironer pads should be replaced every 18 to 24 months because they harden, become brittle and fail to dry fabric effectively. Sometimes laundry workers will reduce the speed to compensate for poor results, which costs you money. For example, if your ironer is designed to press sheets at 100 feet per minute, slowing it to 80 feet per minute reduces productivity by 20 percent, so 10 hours of pressing will take 12. If you have five people manning your ironer, you'd have wasted 10 hours of labor.

5 Forget folding by hand.

A single employee working four hours with a state-of-the-art towel folder can do the work of two workers working eight hours. The latest models can even tell the difference between a hand towel, bath towel and bath mat, so no presorting is required.

6 Take a day off.

Whenever your hotel's occupancy falls below 50 percent, you should consider closing the laundry and giving the team a day off. The team can pick up the excess production the next day. In addition to saving labor, you'll also save a day's worth of energy.

7 Maintain your pars.

Linen shortages result in service lapses that reverberate around your hotel. For example, when your hotel is short of linen, room attendants spend time searching for missing items and can't complete their rooms until missing items arrive. Your hotel needs to maintain at least three complete turns of linen and terry to keep everything running smoothly. **HM**

Dave Heath is principal and founder of Heath & Company Hospitality Advisors, a management advisory firm specializing in improving productivity in hospitality businesses. He can be reached at david.heath@heathandco.com.

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Contact Steven McD. Smith,
Principal – Executive Vice President
Ssmith@chesapeakehospitality.com
301.474.3307

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