

HOTEL LAUNDRY OPERATIONS

working clean

NEW EQUIPMENT AND SUGGESTED BEST PRACTICES CAN HELP HOTELIERS OPERATE THEIR LAUNDRY SERVICES MORE EFFICIENTLY AND COST-EFFECTIVELY, WHILE BEING GENTLE ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

BY DON DOULOFF

Hotellers' laundry operations take a big chunk out of the bottom line and can leave a significant environmental footprint. But a number of innovative new products, and suppliers' suggested best practices, can help boost efficiency and save money, while being gentle on the environment.

OZONE GAINS TRACTION

In the past several years, ozone-based laundry oxidation has gained traction in the industry. Advocating such a system is Charles Reid, general manager of Haddon Equipment & Supplies, a Vancouver-based company that provides laundry equipment and chemical/ozone systems for hotels in BC and the Yukon.

"Ozone is essential to any successful laundry operation in regards to energy efficiency," Reid told CLN. An ozone system will save money on hot water, gas and electrical consumption, leaving a much smaller laundry room carbon footprint, he said.

Moreover, "ROI on a properly

utilized system and an appropriate volume of laundry is two years or less." Ozone's ability to process laundry in cold water reduces hot water consumption by at least 75 per cent, drastically cutting costs, Reid added. In addition, an ozone system will help extend linen life thanks to "less thermal damage in the wash wheel and by reducing drying times, resulting in fewer dollars being spent on linen replacement costs." Combined with proper use and good operating procedures, hoteliers can realize "substantial" savings with this type of system, he said.

Haddon offers the ozone-based Aquawing system, which washes

primarily in cold water, thereby reducing drying time and lessening linen degradation. Ozone relaxes the weave of fabrics, resulting in a more effective wash action. On top of that, ozone's strong oxidizing nature activates chemicals so that they'll be used more effectively and efficiently. This reduces the amount of chemicals required and reduces the harm they can cause if they're not properly rinsed.

Aquawing offers the VO3, a device validating that mandatory levels of ozone have been reached and maintained in the wash wheel, providing disinfection and superior wash results.

TRUE LAUNDRY COSTS

On the service side, to keep costs down and increase efficiency, "hotels need to look at their true laundry cost, such as labour versus per-occupied-room," said Robert McNamara, national general manager of cleaning-service provider Jani-King Canada.

"Hoteliers need to measure occupancy and the levels of laundry costs together in order to accurately gauge laundry loads. This monitoring activity will keep costs down."

Hoteliers, said McNamara, need to implement a preventive maintenance program "so that equipment works at its designed capacity. Analyze staffing production levels; labour cost is the largest expense, so hotels need to know what it is taking them to turn their guestroom linens on a daily basis."

McNamara recommends that hoteliers launder their linens and towels onsite, rather than contracting that service out, which entails

operational risks. For instance, there's no guarantee that all the linens that leave a hotel will be returned; plus, other hotels' linens could get included in returned batches, he said. "Mistakes are made and hotels are paying for it," Jani-King's personnel, he said, function as part of the onsite housekeeping laundry team and work closely with the property's suppliers to develop a customized training program that best fits the hotel.

UNDER-LOADED MACHINES

Addressing the common problem of under-loaded washing machines, which waste water, chemicals and time, is Laundrylux's Compass Pro microprocessor. Introduced in fall, 2013, the Compass Pro measures the weight of the laundry load. If the weight of the linens is less than a full load, the washer automatically adjusts the water and laundry chemicals, for an optimal ratio for the load size.

If a hotel under-loads its system twice a day, the Compass Pro could realize chemical, water and energy savings of \$750 annually, according to Laundrylux senior vice president of on-premises laundry sales Kim Shady.

Addressing another common problem, over-drying, is Laundrylux's Residual Moisture Control (RMC), which measures the moisture content of linens while they're

in the dryer. As the linens dry, the RMC counts down and stops the machine once the linens reach the desired moisture level set by the operator.

Shady estimated that over-drying "happens 60 per cent of the time" and lasts for six to 10 minutes per incident. The RMC is built into the dryer at the factory, at a cost of \$350, and in most locations will pay for itself in the first year, he said.

SUSPENDED WASHERS

Pellerin Milnor has introduced the cabinet style MWF-Series of suspended washers available in 60 lb. (27 kg), 100 lb. (45 kg), 140 lb. (63 kg) and 170 lb. (77 kg) capacities.

The MWF27J8 provides efficiency with 300 Gs, for maximum moisture removal; large door opening (15.63 inches) for easy loading/unloading; and user-friendly E-P Plus control in a small footprint.

In addition, Milnor is offering, standard on this product line, RinSave water saver software, which reduces up to two rinse steps, saving water, energy and time without compromising wash/rinse quality.



HIGHER SPIN SPEEDS

For his part, Stephen Hietpas, new business development manager at Maytag Commercial Laundry, says hoteliers should consider upgrading washers “to models that have higher spin speeds, which remove more water from linens in the washer. This leads to a reduction in the amount of natural gas consumed in the drying process by shortening the dry times.” Dry times, he noted, “can be cut anywhere from 20 per cent to 40 per cent with higher-extraction washers.”

Furthermore, by working closely with a local chemical supplier, hotel owners and operators can determine the appropriate type and amount of detergent needed to clean the laundry and meet resident or guest expectations, said Hietpas. Incorporating a chemical injection system into the machine will help dispense

the precise amount of detergent needed, which ensures the correct amount of chemicals are added to the water and helps guarantee clean laundry.

On the equipment side, the Maytag Commercial Laundry 55-pound soft-mount washer features high-speed extraction of more than 350 G-force, to cut drying time and save on labour and energy costs.

In addition, Maytag Commercial Laundry 75-pound dryers are the most energy-efficient multi-load dryers in the Energy Advantage lineup and feature moisture-sensing technology, improved airflow for faster dry times and a reverse-tumble feature. The dryer senses when the load is dry and shuts down the unit to prevent over-drying, saving time, utility costs and increasing the life of the laundry.

EXTRA-LARGE CAPACITY



Earlier this year, UniMac, a provider of on-premise commercial laundry equipment distributed in Canada by Harco Co. Ltd., introduced the UT200 200-pound tum-

ble dryer.

The UT200 offers an extra-large capacity and an efficient, high-performance heater box. Sealed cylinder rims and a concentrated airflow pattern ensure no heat escapes, helping to keep utility costs down and maximize productivity.

UniMac also offers its Combustion Auto Response Equipped (CARE)

system as an added option for the UT200. CARE monitors for excessive cylinder temperatures and sprays water on the load should it register an abnormally high read-

ing. A “system active” signal can also be sent to a property’s alarm system, laptop or another electronic device to notify the laundry or facility manager.

UniMac’s national sales manager, Bill Brooks, says “on average, labour accounts for 45 per cent to 50 per cent of hotel laundry operating expenses” and that monitoring systems such as the company’s UniLinc product can help hoteliers increase efficiency.

UniLinc’s OPTispray rinsing technology provides highly effective rinsing that uses less water and decreases operating costs, and increases throughput by decreasing rinse-cycle times by up to 12 per cent.

Slow drain detection monitors drain time to catch issues early and reduce maintenance expenses.

Case Studies

CASINO RAMA: HOW TO SAVE 15 HOURS DAILY WITH RFID

RAMA, ON—Casino Rama is saving time and money since its implemented InvoTech Systems Ltd.’s uniform system to track and maintain the asset value of the casino resort’s 15,000 uniforms.

InvoTech Systems, Inc. is a leading provider of systems that integrate the latest RFID technology to increase profitability for hotels, casinos, hospitals, and commercial laundry operators

“Our team estimates we are saving 15 hours a day in labor with InvoTech. This is huge,” said Helen Cooper, director of hotel and resort operations for Casino Rama, one of Canada’s premier entertainment destinations in the heart of Ontario’s lake country.

“With our old system, we had to have people on site 24 hours per day processing each uniform item. InvoTech scans, counts and records entire racks and carts of uniforms in

seconds. It is a huge increase in productivity,” Cooper said.

“InvoTech also eliminated waiting lines for staff queuing to pick up uniforms. Now they swipe their ID card one time and their clean uniforms are automatically delivered to them.”

The InvoTech system communicates with Casino Rama’s White Conveyors U-Pick-It automated uniform delivery system that moves specific uniforms quickly and neatly to the appropriate employee’s hands. Casino Rama has a uniformed crew of almost 2,000.

‘A MORE EFFICIENT WAY TO DO BUSINESS’

The InvoTech system utilizes easy-to-use touch-screen monitors and advanced UHF-RFID technology that automatically reads and records durable waterproof tags on the uniforms without manual sorting. “We

did not have to build anything special to install InvoTech and start working,” said Cooper.

“We were looking for a more efficient way to do business and InvoTech provides it. The system also forecasts our budget for new articles because we know how long each garment has been used. InvoTech’s training and installation team was very professional and got us up to speed quickly.”

20-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Casino Rama will soon mark its 20-year anniversary. The property opened as a standalone casino, but now is a full service, all-suite destination resort with 289 luxury suites. “We have grown since opening and our uniforms are part of that growth. Some of our crew members have six different uniforms. InvoTech manages this perfectly; our old system couldn’t handle that much



New UHF-RFID system helps Casino Rama luxury resort in Ontario grow with greater efficiency, automated uniform laundry processing.

detail,” said Cooper.

Other InvoTech clients include MGM Resorts International, Hyatt Hotels, Marriott, Hilton Hotels, Universal Studios Florida, Wynn Resort Las Vegas and Macau, Madison Square Garden, MSR-FSR Laundry, Empire State Building, Loews Hotels, Mandarin Oriental, and other leading companies.

ABOUT CASINO RAMA

Operating since July 31, 1996, Ca-

sino Rama is Ontario’s only First Nations commercial casino and has earned a reputation for presenting exclusive world-class sporting, entertainment and television events.

The casino offers a complete entertainment experience with over 2,500 slot machines, more than 110 gaming tables, eight unique restaurants, a world-class 5,000 seat entertainment centre, and an all-suite, full-service hotel, featuring spa and health club facilities

OTTAWA VALLEY LAUNDRIES TAILORED TO HANDLE VOLUME AND SPACE

PEMBROKE/PETAWAWA, ON—Jessica Schmidt, general manager at Holiday Inn Express, Pembroke, works for a management group that currently owns two hotels.

The first, built in 2011, the Petawawa Quality Inn & Suites, is located two and a half hours northwest of Ottawa. With 66 rooms available, this hotel caters to an assortment of guests that travel to Garrison Petawawa and the surrounding area for business.

The second hotel is a 10-month-old Holiday Inn Express in Pembroke, Ontario.

The new Holiday Inn Express

launders roughly 700 pounds of linens per day when fully occupied. Schmidt notes that UniMac was their first choice “because their equipment offers the most advanced technology in order to process all of that laundry in the shortest time frame, increasing our laundry throughput and eliminating the need to expand our laundry area or add over-time hours.”

The space in the Petawawa Inn & Suites laundry room is an issue, Schmidt told CLN. “We decided to work with Harco and UniMac because of their reputation for service and the machine’s dependability. We needed equipment that provided

quality results and handled the laundry load we had. The machines that we purchased suited our space and are capable of washing at a capacity that keeps us efficient during our workday.”

REMOTE LOCATION

“Because we are remotely located, we needed dependable, durable machines that were built to last. Additionally, we wanted machines with an easy-to-use control system that our employees could understand and use across both our washer-extractors and tumble dryers. With UniLinc, our employees are able to receive au-

tomatic warning e-mails and maintenance reminders, which is key to helping us to prevent downtime because we pre-emptively service our equipment.”

Staff particularly appreciate the increased throughput that results from the shortened wash and dry times, Schmidt added.

The two hotels use UniLinc, OPTidry and OPTispray at their new facility.

“OPTispray Rinsing Technology provides us with highly effective rinsing that uses less water and decreases operating costs. The nine ECO Cycles and 400 G-Force extraction that come with our new UW washer-extractor help us to further decrease

water usage and drying times, reduce our labour costs and increase our laundry throughput, while also saving on energy costs,” Schmidt noted.

“OPTidry helps us to preserve our linen investment by preventing our staff from having to guess if linens are dry.”

Schmidt says the hotels chose Harco for ongoing maintenance because “they understand the impact that a broken machine can have on a hotel and staff’s ability to perform basic tasks, such as housekeeping. We needed one rather large repair and our Harco rep was able to assist us with parts and service immediately, because of the ability to send parts overnight.”