



Housekeeping

by Greg Eubanks

Saving millions in housekeeping costs – Just by taking OneSTEP

*Another great article from The Rooms Chronicle®, the #1 journal for hotel rooms management! ***Important notice: This article may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher or the author.*** College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, P.O. Box 2036, Niagara University, NY 14109-2036. Phone: 866-Read TRC. E-mail: editor@roomschronicle.com*

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When executives at LaQuinta Inn and Suites calculated they could save a substantial amount each year in housekeeping costs, simply by making a few adjustments in the products being used in their guestrooms, they jumped at the chance. “We’ve always focused on creating efficiencies throughout our operations,” says Angelo Lombardi, LaQuinta’s Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer. “We know that every minute of housekeeping time per room equals \$1.5 million annually in cost. Anything we can do to enhance the guest experience while simultaneously creating laundry and/or housekeeping efficiencies is a win-win!”

LaQuinta worked with Standard Textile, a leader in the design, development, manufacture and distribution of hospitality textiles to create solutions that would fit the hotelier’s needs. The collaboration eventually resulted in the OneSTEP program, a new collection of products introduced this past November during the International Hotel/Motel & Restaurant Show in New York City.

“OneSTEP stands for ‘One Solution to Enhance Productivity,’ and the program does just that,” explained Richard Stewart, Vice President of Product Management and Development for Standard Textile. “While each of the products offers its own unique set of benefits to hoteliers, when combined, they offer housekeepers and laundry professionals tools to shorten processing and bed make-up time.”

To prove the effectiveness of the solutions offered in the OneSTEP program, Standard Textile worked with housekeepers at the LaQuinta chain to perform a side-by-side comparison of the OneSTEP program versus traditional linen products. The results were better than expected: Housekeepers employing the OneSTEP program saved an average of three minutes in combined laundry processing and housekeeping bed make-up time per room.

For LaQuinta, the savings provided by the OneSTEP program quickly added up. The hotels save approximately \$0.50 each time it makes up a room using each of the OneSTEP products. Lombardi states, “This is an example of the type of partnerships we try to develop for the advantage of our guests and our stakeholders. Over the past three years we have been able to significantly upgrade the quality of linen we provide to our guest without increasing our overall costs. This enhances guest loyalty and ultimately is better for our bottom line.”

Standard Textile’s OneSTEP program consists of five distinct characteristics. Each aspect of the program works in tandem with the other to provide maximum efficiency.

Pictured below: OneSTEP’s top cover provides the look and feel of a duvet cover, yet is easier for room attendants to change out.



Pre-laundered and ready for use

First, the products arrive Room Ready for You™ pre-laundered with Tide®, a process that delivers sheets and towels ready for use right out of the box. Standard Textile launders its linens with Tide brand detergent because, according to Stewart, “The products are always reliably soft, fresh and clean – something that our hotel customers have grown to expect from our pre-laundered products.” Stewart added that products that arrive Room Ready for You laundered with Tide save a hotel on both acquisition and labor costs from the outset.

“A hotel laundry assumes a tremendous expense when it receives new linen products. Most sheets and towels need to be unpackaged, unwrapped, shaken out and put into a special laundry cycle for their first wash. This is an expensive and time-consuming process. In fact, the average laundry spends 35 cents for every pound of linen processed, including labor, chemicals and distribution costs of laundering all the new material,” Stewart said.

Easy to use features

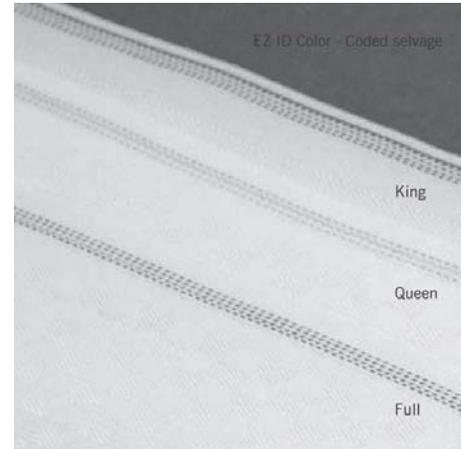
In addition to its pre-laundered linens, the OneSTEP program features EZ ID Sheeting, balanced hems and Center Lock Labels that Standard Textile developed specifically for inclusion in the OneSTEP program. Each is designed with housekeeping staffs in mind, with the purpose of saving bed make up time and room processing.

The OneSTEP program offers sheeting with color-coded selvage yarns that run the length of each sheet. Known as EZ ID, this patented technology allows sheet sizes to be easily identified by the color coding woven in the selvage, which can be tucked away when the bed is made by the housekeeper. “Early feedback from our LaQuinta customers indicated that the EZ ID yarn allowed both the Laundry and Housekeeping departments with a way to easily identify the correct size of the sheet. This eliminated the struggle to identify king sheets from queen sheets,” said Stewart.

Another product innovation that resulted from Standard Textile’s collaboration with LaQuinta was the addition of balanced, two-inch top and bottom hems on every sheet. “The feature allows our housekeeping staff to place the sheet in the correct position on the bed regardless of which end is up,” said Lombardi. “Our room attendants gave this feature high marks because it is just so user-friendly.”

In addition, Standard Textile’s OneSTEP program comes with sheeting that features a new Center Lock Label, which centers the product label in the hem. This was a feature that LaQuinta specifically identified as an important solution to its needs. During a factory tour, Standard Textile and LaQuinta representatives conducted a brainstorming session on how to find ways to create

Pictured below: The selvage yarns of OneSTEP’s linens are color-coded to easily identify the size of the sheet.



housekeeping efficiencies. “We came up with all kinds of ideas and this was one of those “We’ve got it!” moments said Stewart. The centered label removes the guesswork of finding a sheet’s center and balancing the sheet’s length on each side of the bed—time spent that can quickly add up. “At first glance, a few seconds spent here or there checking each side of the bed to see if the sheet is centered may seem like a relatively small amount of time. But shaving a few seconds off bed make-up time in each guestroom really makes a big difference, especially for larger properties.”

Angelo Lombardi echoed that statement. “We understand our business, and every second counts.”

New fiber technology

The final element of Standard Textile’s OneSTEP program is the addition of top covers from the company’s design studio. The top

How much \$ does a minute save?

Housekeeping and on-premise laundry productivity is crucial to streamlined efficiency and effective labor savings for every property. Obviously, the larger the property or chain, the greater cost savings that can be achieved.

Here are three steps to calculate labor cost savings through the implementation of streamlined housekeeping practices such as the OneSTEP linen program:

Step 1. Determine the total number of productivity minutes saved per day.

= (Number of minutes saved per room) x (Number of rooms in property or company-wide) x (Average annual occupancy of chain or hotel)

Step 2. Determine the average labor cost savings per day.

= (Number of minutes saved per day) x (Average cost per minute labor)

Note: The average cost per minute labor = (housekeeper’s hourly wage)/60

Step 3. Determine total cost savings per year.

= (Average cost savings per day) x (365 days per year)

Example:

Number of minutes saved per guestroom = 3
Hotel Chain = 5,000 guestrooms
Average annual chain occupancy = 61.5%
Average housekeeper wage = \$8.00/hour = \$0.134 per minute

Step 1: (3 minutes) x (5,000 rooms) x (.615) = 9,225 minutes saved per day

Step 2: (9,225 minutes per day) x (0.134) = \$1,236.15 saved per day

Step 3: (\$1,236.15) x (365 days) = \$451,194.75 savings per year

Summary: By implementing streamlined linen procedures as described above in the OneSTEP program, a typical 5,000-room hotel chain could save \$451,194 per year! A single 500-room property would save \$45,119 per year! And a 50-room hotel would save \$4,511 per year!

Pictured below: Center Lock Labels remove the guesswork so room attendants can easily center the linen on the bed.



covers provide the look and feel of a duvet cover, without the housekeeping aerobics needed to continually insert and remove a duvet. In addition, these innovative top covers are more durable and longer-lasting than duvet covers.

Stewart explained that Standard Textile is able to achieve these results through its patented Centium Core Technology™. The technology works by replacing natural fibers like cotton, which are typically found in the core of a linen product, with a microfilament polymeric yarn. The polymeric yarn has a higher tenacity than natural fiber, which results in a product that is stronger and more durable than products composed of 100-percent cotton.

The end result of using Centium Core Technology is a top cover that feels softer since the top surface is largely cotton while the inner core is a more durable microfilament.

“The hotel delivers the luxury that guests expect – a plusher, thicker and more luxurious top cover, without spending thousands of extra dollars in labor costs or replacing worn-out duvets,” said Stewart.

Conclusion

Executives at the LaQuinta chain have been extremely pleased with each of the products offered by the Standard Textile OneSTEP program. Both Stewart and Lombardi refer to the program as a true collaboration between business partners.

“The OneSTEP program didn’t develop over night. There were moments of trial and error,” said Stewart. “But there were also those ‘Aha!’ moments when we realized we had come up with something that was truly going to impact LaQuinta’s bottom line.”

Lombardi affirms, stating, “We love working with suppliers like Standard Textile. They are true business partners in every sense of the word.” ✧

(Greg Eubanks is Group Vice President of Hospitality Sales and Marketing for Standard Textile. Hoteliers who would like to take OneSTEP to improving their housekeeping efficiency may contact Standard Textile at 800-323-5246. Website: www.standardtextile.com.)