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Mr. Guyer

*Eco-Friendly Practices*

## Hospitality Industry Recognizes Building Envelope as Significant to Achieving “Green” Goals

By [Brian Guyer](#), Sales Manager, Commercial Projects, Window and Door Business Unit, Rehau, Inc.

With its entrenchment over the past several years across the construction industry, the sustainability movement has proven its mettle as a vehicle for both environmental and economic benefit. Understanding that the term “green” provides immediate brand value to environmentally conscious consumers, many industries have embraced sustainability practices, both in their day-to-day operations and in the

thoughtful construction or renovation of their buildings. The hospitality industry is no exception to this, and those from boutique operations to major hotel conglomerates are executing thoughtful and strategic initiatives to not only communicate their commitment to sustainability, but also to put it into concrete action.

When drilling down on the construction end of “going green,” particularly in relation to the evolved green building movement and stronghold initiatives such as the U.S. Green Building Council’s (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certification program, it’s easy to see both brand value and cost-effectiveness across green building parameters. More specifically, actual and long-term savings have already been realized by employing elements such as natural and LED lighting, water reduction and reclamation products, zoned mechanical systems and renewable energy technologies. However, some of the greatest energy savings, and ultimate adherence to sustainable construction standards, can come from the significant (yet oftentimes “invisible”) building envelope. By definition, this encompasses all wall, ceiling, exterior cladding, insulating and opening – i.e., windows and doors – elements of the building itself.

### And the Envelope, Please

Think about the skin as the human body’s largest organ. In similar fashion, the building envelope represents a significant percentage of a structure, with major roles including protection and insulation of its interior contents (and inhabitants). Nevertheless, as the sustainable construction movement has progressed, this “major organ” is overlooked to a surprising degree, with attention often being focused on products and systems installed inside the building. In the hospitality industry, this is true for both retrofit and new construction, with much of the thought about a building’s “shell” being placed on exterior aesthetics only.

The reason for this is multi-dimensional, and certainly varies from project to project. However, the bottom line is, when it comes to construction planning, many hotels are focused on marketability and attracting business. This logic is guided not only by sheer economics, but also by the thinking that anything which can be seen or touched will have the most value to guests. Stepping back from this logic however, it’s important to realize a majority of guest satisfaction is, plain and simple, related to a good night’s sleep. And the major deterrents to this – namely noise and inconsistent temperature control – are directly related to the quality of the building envelope. When zeroing in on what these things indicate from a green building perspective, very likely a noisy, drafty or muggy hotel room translates to poor insulation and either outdated or low-quality windows and doors. And considering that, according to the USGBC, buildings in the U.S. alone account for 36 percent of total energy use, 65 percent of electricity consumption and 30 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, carefully chosen building envelope components can seriously impact a hotel’s “green” quotient (not to mention its energy bills).

The U.S. government has also recognized both the environmental and economic value of promoting green building practices, particularly

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### MAY: Green Hotels: Eco-Friendly Principles and Best Practices



### Let’s Get Engaged!

By [Herve Houdre](#), Regional Director of Operations & General Manager, Intercontinental New York Barclay

Sustainable Development is a fairly new concept in the hotel industry and though many hoteliers have included it in their strategy, it does not yet have the recognition it deserves in view of the better revenues and margins it can develop. The challenge comes from lack of concerted engagement of industry stakeholders, from owners to suppliers, from employees to customers. The Sustainable business model is still in its infancy and there is a long journey ahead, so let’s be positive and Let’s Get Engaged! [READ MORE](#)



### The Green Buzz at Fairmont Washington, D.C., Georgetown

By [Diana K. Bulger](#), Area Director of Public Relations, The Fairmont Washington, D.C., Georgetown and Fairmont Pittsburgh

In response to the nation’s Honeybee shortage and as part of the hotel’s environmental stewardship program, Fairmont Washington, D.C., Georgetown welcomed 105,000 Italian honeybees to their new home in May of 2009. The rooftop of Fairmont Washington, D.C., Georgetown is abuzz with four large honey beehives and their ecologically important residents. The bees enhance the hotel’s culinary program, as does its interior courtyard garden which provides fresh herbs, edible blossoms, plants, trees and flowers to the surrounding Georgetown neighborhood. [READ MORE](#)



### The Importance of Practicing Sustainability Within the Hospitality Industry



when it comes to reducing the country's energy use and related greenhouse gas emissions. Programs such as the Energy Efficient Commercial Buildings Tax Deduction (available through 2013), which provides relief of up to \$1.80 per square foot for either updating or designing for 50 percent or greater energy efficiency, have made it possible for hoteliers to afford serious investment in their building envelopes. This is good news indeed – for them, for the earth and for those in the building envelope business – as only the question of “Where to start?” remains.

By Don Shindle, General Manager, Westin Verasa Napa

The hospitality industry has seen significant change as green initiatives and sustainability have taken a more prominent role in today's world and in the consciousness of our guests and our staff. Hotel operators across the globe are held increasingly accountable to a “worldwide global citizenship” standard. This is a term that our team fully embraces here at The Westin Verasa Napa. We understand how significant this responsibility is and the importance of sustainability on a long-term basis. As a community leader, we are committed to positively contributing to our environmental well-being now and in our future endeavors.

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## Behind Closed Doors (and Windows)

Windows and doors not only represent a notable portion of the building envelope, they are also either major culprits of or defenders against energy loss. Thus, making an informed choice in windows and doors – whether in specifying for new construction or investing in upgrades – is of key importance to a hotel owner/operator's green building goals.

A high-quality profile system – essentially the frame portion of the window or door – that has been engineered for high efficiency is a great place to start when investigating new or replacement options. The type and quality of a profile's material equate to much of a window or door's long-term performance characteristics, including insulating versus conductive properties. For example, window framing materials directly affect solar heat gain resistance (or lack thereof) in high solar radiation zones, meaning that frame materials which are more conductive will elevate the temperature in a hotel room and increase the load demand on its air conditioning system. Likewise, low outside air temperatures will further cool conductive window framing materials (like metal), requiring the HVAC system to compensate for the additional cold being emitted into the room.

A material such as commercial-grade uPVC, which has natural insulating properties, can drastically reduce HVAC system load issues by maintaining versus challenging the desired indoor temperature. In conjunction with the quality of the overall profile design, framing material has a direct impact on energy consumption/savings. Additional window and door design elements that contribute to energy savings include a multi-chamber frame and quality glazing (i.e., the glass portion of the window), and of course a professional installation job.

Beyond energy savings, a window or door's framing material and design can directly impact moisture performance, both in their ability to keep exterior weather-related moisture from leaking into the window frame itself and in their inhibition of condensation formation from inside versus outside temperature differences. Thus, investment in high-quality, high-performance windows and doors can also directly impact indoor air quality by protecting from moisture and mold damage (a costly and unfortunately all too common challenge in the hospitality industry).

## Sealing in Sustainability

While much work remains in elevating the hotel industry's sustainability factor, particularly in relation to the building envelope, several owners and operators have made strides to get serious about getting green over the past few years. This has been evident in both renovation projects focused on improving energy efficiency, as well as in new construction standards incorporating high-performance building envelope features.

As one example, in 2007 the then 35 year-old Holiday Inn Gaithersburg underwent a complete renovation centered around its property management company's “Our Big Green” initiative to conserve resources, reduce and recycle waste and incorporate the latest in sustainable building methods and products. The major focus of this renovation was a total window replacement to improve the hotel's aesthetics and sound abatement properties, and most significantly to enhance its energy performance.



## Does Green Matter to Guests?

By Pamela Parsons, Senior Vice President, ForrestPerkins

Sustainable design makes a difference. The national government believes it, corporations believe it, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg believes it, and hoteliers are beginning to believe it. But do hotel guests really think it matters? In the forward to Hotel, Design, Planning and Development, by Penner, Adams, and Robson, architect Michael Graves opines that architects and designers “believe that guests appreciate the healthful aspects of environmentally responsible places, as much as they appreciate good design.” This assumption is, at least in part, the driving force behind the growth in green hotels. [READ](#)

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*Holiday Inn Gaithersburg (before)*

A hybrid uPVC REHAU curtain wall design was selected after energy modeling results showed they could provide a regulated utility cost reduction of 12.4 percent, translating to both a \$10,000 annual energy cost savings and the project's qualification for a \$.60 per square foot tax deduction through the Energy Efficient Commercial Buildings Tax Deduction program. Since the renovation's completion in 2009, the Holiday Inn Gaithersburg has more than realized a return on its investment, and has noted a high level of guest satisfaction.



*Holiday Inn Gaithersburg (after)*

More recently, the 11-story DoubleTree by Hilton San Diego/Mission Valley, constructed in the mid-1990s, underwent replacement of all 345 original aluminum-frame windows and doors on the property with high-performance uPVC REHAU compression-sealed window and tilt-slide door designs. The uPVC-based solutions were selected after mock-up field testing by a third-party engineering firm showed their ability to exceed the energy performance, sound abatement and moisture protection criterion for the project, while also outperforming competing windows and doors in a side-by-side evaluation. Completed within the past year, the window and door replacement project is anticipated to achieve annual savings of \$31,000 in addition to making the property eligible for energy credits or a rebate savings/issuance through the City of San Diego and San Diego Gas & Electric.



Heathman Hotel in Kirkland, Washington

On the new construction front, design of the 91-room Heathman Hotel in Kirkland, Washington specified uPVC French doors in all guest rooms that would reflect the hotel's boutique-style charm while also enhancing guest comfort and improving building performance thanks to their high-efficiency design. The notable insulating properties of these doors were also a contributing factor to the Heathman's designation as the first "Built Green" hotel to be constructed in Washington State. Since opening for business in 2007, the Heathman has implemented several sustainable initiatives through its Green Choices program, including the installation of intelligent environmental control thermostats and sensors that can detect guest room occupancy and adjust temperatures accordingly. The uPVC French doors, designed by REHAU, remain not only an attractive exterior feature of the hotel, but also major proponents of sealing in comfortable and consistent temperatures.

#### A Bright (Green) Future

As hotel owners and operators continue to educate themselves on the ways "going green" makes both economic and environmental sense, it is expected that the advantages of focusing on their building envelopes will become all the more evident. A typical payback period for building envelope investments like high-efficiency windows and doors is approximately three years, after which resulting energy savings become an ongoing net gain on the balance sheet. This, in addition to the elevated level of guest satisfaction from improved climate control and sound abatement (even if these are more "invisible" aspects), makes investing in the building envelope a clear win-win for any hotelier's sustainability plan.

Brian L. Guyer is sales manager for the commercial windows and doors strategic business unit at REHAU. With more than 20 years of marketing experience, Mr. Guyer has signed a number of major accounts to multi-year contracts with REHAU and has expanded select product lines into new market regions and segments. Prior to joining REHAU, Mr. Guyer was vice president of sales and marketing at Jamison Door Company in Hagerstown, MD, where he led product development, introduced new product lines and developed a multi-dimensional marketing program for the company to include publicity, trade shows and direct marketing. Mr. Guyer can be contacted at 800-247-9445 or [rehau.mailbox@rehau.com](mailto:rehau.mailbox@rehau.com) [Extended Bio...](#)

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*Coming Up In The June Online Hotel Business Review*

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On any hotel design project, architects are generally serving at least three masters - the owner/developer, the hotel operator, and the general public who will utilize the hotel - and each have their own goals, objectives and demands. The owner/developer is concerned with brand standards, the target market and the hotel's locale, while the operator is concerned about achieving the highest possible revenue through efficient design. The public is demanding that architecture and design be fully integrated into the guest experience, based on prevailing tastes and preferences. The architect's role is to respond professionally and efficiently to meet the demands of all and to develop a unified solution. Though each project has its own prerequisites and obligations, there are some general design trends which seem to be prevalent across the industry. First, there is an increased emphasis on the importance of the lobby. The principle here is that first impressions matter and that a hotel has only a few minutes to convince a guest that they have made the right decision. Hotel lobbies are being completely re-imagined - from eliminating front desks altogether to turning lobbies into warm, intimate social spaces, replete with fireplaces and comfortable furniture. There is also an increasing use of ambient natural light, even in large spaces like ballrooms and meeting rooms. In addition, there is greater emphasis on incorporating the distinctive attributes of any given location into the hotel design, which guests are defining as central to their experiences. The June issue of the Hotel Business Review will report on all these exciting developments in the fields of architecture and design.

#### In this issue...

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