

## A Case study: Engaging staff: London Heathrow Marriott

Earlier this year the London Heathrow Marriott received a Gold Award from the Green Tourism for London Scheme. Last week, Green Hotelier went to speak to General Manager, Ron Vos, to find out about all the initiatives they've implemented in the last 18 months and what impact they have had. Besides the economic savings, Ron was quick to point out that sustainability has proven to be an excellent way of bringing staff together and engaging with the local community. In the hotel's Green Committee, "everyone is involved from the general manager and chief engineer to housekeeping and human resources... the Marriott culture very much encourages us to get involved in the community, as well as roll out initiatives that are specific to the hotel."

Here are the top 10 sustainable features of the London Heathrow Marriott:

### Car charging points

The hotel installed and activated two electric car charging stations this year, joining forces with Zero Carbon World and car giant Renault to support sustainable travel initiatives and conserve natural resources. Any guest staying at the hotel with an electric car will be able to park and charge their car for free.

### Car park lighting

The hotel worked with Gemma Lighting to enhance lighting levels in the car park and save energy by installing new LED bulbs. This has reduced maintenance costs, saving the hotel approximately £7500 a year and reducing the hotel's carbon footprint by 17 tons annually.

### Displacing cistern water

The hotel saves one litre of water on every toilet flush through a very simple hotel-led initiative. Using plastic bottles recycled from bedrooms and the restaurant, the hotel put a 1 litre plastic water bottle filled with 1 litre of water in each cistern. This displaces 1 litre of water. The engineer responsible tells Green Hotelier, 'Using last year as an example, the total saving in one year was 121925.25 litres based on one flush a day.'

### Installation of flow regulators

By installing the flow regulation product Grohe at the end of sink and shower taps, the hotel saves 3 litres of water per minute.

### Solar panels and windmill installation

The windmill and solar panels on the roof provides enough power to light up the LED Marriott sign. A hybrid windmill solar power system is connected to a series of batteries and invertors, which cleverly light up the LED Marriott sign. This reduces a substantial amount of electricity per day, which is estimated to save a staggering 12 tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year!

### Roof garden

A Green House has been constructed on the hotel roof 22 metres in the air, specifically built to provide the hotel kitchen with fresh herbs and vegetables for use in the hotel's restaurants. The roof is ideal for capturing sunshine and collecting rainwater in a tank – currently used for watering the plants growing there.

### Recycling 100% waste

At London Heathrow Marriot zero waste goes to land fill. Alongside conventional recycling the organic waste including cooking oil is recycled and used to fuel incinerators.

### Educating guests

Information on the hotel's initiatives and green tips for guests are accessible in room welcome packs and on the hotel website. The Responsible Visitor Charter offers useful tips encouraging our guests to be environmentally aware. Green Business Networks, partnering with Steer Davies Gleave, promotes a journey planner and sustainable transport to get a door-to-door public transport route which includes directions and costs. And a Green Meeting fact sheet containing information on some of the initiatives taken at the hotel, such as paperless billing, e-menus and stationary made from recycled material.

### Staff training

The daily meeting packet, which is communicated to all departments in the hotel, includes a green topic daily and quarterly meetings feature a 'Green Update' presentation, to ensure that all staff know about the latest initiatives. A green topic is also included in the HR newsletter.

### Earth Hour

London Heathrow Marriot is proud to participate in the annual Earth Hour event by turning off all hotel lights for one hour, raising guest and associate awareness on climate change and showing their support for a more sustainable future.

To understand the real value of these initiatives, we asked the General Manager some further questions:

What have been the benefits of implementing sustainable initiatives?

“We have made substantial financial savings on water and energy consumption since implementing our green initiatives. We have also seen savings on purchasing fresh herbs and vegetables for our restaurants, since we have been growing them in our roof top green house. Team spirit around the entire hotel has also benefited – we want to be the 'greenest' hotel in Heathrow and the hotel team are all enthused to achieve this. During hotel show rounds for our clients, our initiatives always stand out and have become the real ‘wow’ factor of the hotel. Our green philosophy matches that of many guests and our clients – resulting in closer relationships and engagement. It has also been a contributing factor in finding high-profile business partners and getting additional publicity for the hotel.”

Do you have plans to expand on green initiatives in the future?

“We are currently looking for a partner to install the flat roof for solar panels and other energy saving initiatives will feature highly in next year’s hotel refurbishment in all the public areas. We are also looking to further promote our "cycle to work scheme", so that it is not only available for our hotel staff but also for guests working in neighbouring business parks. Hopefully we will start working with BAA to promote our free parking and charging stations for electric vehicles in the hotel.”

What would be your top 3 bits of advice to hotels looking to do the same?

“Set yourself clear goals on energy and water consumption reduction and share them with the whole team, so that everyone is in it together. Establish a 'Green Team' with members from different departments as a way of consolidating this sense of communal effort. Make a short term plan on easy to implement items and a long term plan where capital investment might be required.”

Source: <http://www.greenhotelier.org/our-themes/community-communication-engagement/best-practice-london-heathrow-marriott/>