

HOTEL BUSINESS® Energy Management

J.W. Marriott Miami is going green

By ADAM PERKOWSKY

MIAMI—A famous TV frog once said, “It’s not easy being green.” For hotels like the J.W. Marriott Miami—one of the first properties on Bickell Avenue in this city’s financial district—the effort to “go green” and become more energy efficient is an arduous one that doesn’t happen overnight.

Earlier this year, the hotel—which, upon its opening in 2000, was the first J.W. Marriott franchisee in the world—formed a green committee to figure out ways to conserve energy and, in turn, save money. The committee consists of one representative each from the housekeeping, front office, executive office, stewarding and engineering departments of the luxury hotel.

“Marriott is dedicated to promoting sustainability throughout its hotels across all brands in all countries, and that inspired us here at the local level to take it upon ourselves to make the hotel a more energy-efficient property,” said Arnold Beltran, head of the committee and director of engineering at the hotel, which is part of the MDM Brickell Hotel Group. “Our engineering department was eager to take on this challenge and help us reduce our carbon footprint, lowering operational costs at the same time. It then initiated the green committee, which would meet regularly to imple-

ment the various efforts and come up with new ways to reduce our energy consumption.

“The technology for energy and sustainability management is out there, we just need to harness and utilize it to improve energy efficiency in every aspect of building operations,” Beltran continued. “And, often times, energy savings can start with small things that we don’t usually do—or we neglect to do—in our daily living that do not even require an investment.”

The first phase of the green initiative focused on two things: lamps and thermostats. Over the course of five months, the hotel replaced around 5,000 regular bulbs with more energy-efficient LED sources. The hotel estimates that the new bulbs will lower the property’s light energy consumption by 70% by the end of the year.

The hotel is already receiving positive feedback about the upgrade in lighting from its guests.

“Guests have stated that the lighting in the bathroom has improved and is significantly brighter. The temperature in the guestrooms is much cooler and more comfortable due to the change to LEDs,” said Beltran. “It is great when efforts like this are a win-win for everybody. The guests are happier with our offering and, at the same time, we are doing something great for the environment. Guests are es-

pecially thrilled when we tell them these changes.”

The second step of the first phase involved replacing traditional thermostats in 307 rooms with Telkonet, Inc.’s EcoSmart energy-management system via a deal with Telkonet partner Evolutix, a Brazil-based company that provides energy-management solutions. The installation of the EcoSmart system began in August and is expected to be completed by the end of November, according to Beltran.

“We chose to work with Evolutix because they offered the most reasonable price with state-of-the-art EcoSmart Thermostat system,” said Beltran. “We were also really impressed with their technology, and their commitment in making sure we were choosing the right product for our operation.”

All rooms include the EcoSmart suite of product and services: the EcoCentral Virtual Engineer, a cloud-based monitoring and control system that allows property and asset managers the ability to monitor room-by-room cost savings; the EcoInsight energy management thermostat; and the EcoView in-room occupancy sensor. According to Telkonet, the EcoSmart energy-management system reduces energy consumption and run-time by as much as 45%.

When combining the bene-

fits of both the new lamps and the EcoSmart system, the hotel estimates that total energy consumption will be lowered 40% by year-end, with an estimated savings of 35% on energy and 25% on lighting.

The next phase of J.W. Marriott Miami’s green initiative, according to Beltran, will be the installation of variable frequency drives on major mechanical equipment, such as chilled water pumps, condenser water pumps and cooling

towers. It is expected to begin in November and take approximately six months to complete.

“The variable frequency drives will significantly reduce the electric consumption on major equipment where it is installed by making it run to its maximum efficiency,” said Beltran. “In many applications, variable drives reduce motor electricity consumption by 30% to 60%. We are excited to implement this system and reduce our consumption even more.”

J.W. Marriott Miami and its green committee’s effort to “go green” will be an ongoing process. “It is our property’s goal to continue the efforts of operating a more energy-efficient property,” said Beltran. “Not only does it allow us to lower utility operational costs, but it is also our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint in every possible way for the benefit of the greater good.” **MB**



A guestroom at the J.W. Marriott Miami with a recently installed EcoSmart thermostat

