

# teaching note

## *Going Beyond Recycling by Embracing Total Sustainability: A case study of Rosen Hotels*

### Summary

#### *Background of the Study*

Rosen Hotels is 37 years old with seven properties, which contributes 6,300 rooms in Central Florida and consists of three convention properties and four tour and travel properties. Our case study focuses on the three convention properties: Rosen Shingle Creek (1500 rooms) opened in 2006, Rosen Centre (1334 rooms) opened in 1995 and Rosen Plaza (800 rooms) opened in 1991. The case study highlights how Rosen Hotels introduced and implemented its sustainability initiatives. It explains that Rosen Hotels has gone beyond the traditional economical, ecological and societal principles. This study discusses Rosen Hotels' pursuit into its associates' participation and wellness as the quintessential instrument to its effective sustainable culture.

#### **Why Rosen Hotels?**

Rosen Hotels is the first hospitality entity in Central Florida to be designated "Two Palms" through the Florida Department of Environment Protection Green Lodging Program in 2008 for its three convention properties thus the Rosen Shingle Creek, Rosen Centre and Rosen Plaza. It is an independent, privately owned entity that has significantly embraced sustainable development as part of its vision and legacy. It is a growing entity with indelible footprints in supporting conservation efforts, training and changing its associates' beliefs towards environmental protection which is an emblem of sorts. It is continuously making a difference in society; renowned for its community involvement, such as (Tangelo Park, YMCA, Haiti Task Force, Rosen College of Hospitality Management-UCF) and promoting this fellowship to its clients, who may have a chance to help a local charity or organization in need when simultaneously in town for its convention through the "Rosen Rewards" program. Rosen Hotels has established the "Green Team" Committee responsible for heading initiatives with departments, alerting the associates of their responsibilities and expectations towards sustainability. It continuously renovates, innovates and interpolates its ways by embracing sound changes that leverage economical, societal and environmental dimensions.

Rosen Hotels has a unique organizational structure with the Founder, COO and President Mr. Harris Rosen being mostly known in the community for his contributions and acute business acumen. The executive team includes a focused, determined and progressive minded group who has open arms to innovation. The Engineering Executives together with Human Resources Management were responsible for pioneering and groundbreaking the green initiatives within Rosen Hotels. They were responsible for training, implementing

the tools towards breaking the tradition of doing "business as usual". The Engineering Department has started the Green Team that is responsible for up-keeping the green culture among departments and associates. When others are recruiting consultancy firms to do their work as far as monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of their waste management, energy management systems and energy star equipment they are self-sufficient and undertake these tasks themselves. The Engineering Department is concerned about results, the interest level of the associates and their participation level towards sustainability hence the creation of the Green Team. The question was, "what's next after winning an award, or after reducing energy usage, does it end there or they are even propelled to get on top of this revolutionary period of the industry and do their best to reduce the carbon foot print and build a sustainable legacy for the generations to come?"

This case study chose the Rosen Hotels as representative of the hospitality management in lodging and a respectable out of the norm chain but privately owned and holding the highest number of sleeping rooms in Central Florida by any small organization (Rosen Hotels, Green Meetings, 2012). The City of Orlando boasts as the "first city in the nation to serve 50 million visitors in 2011 and holds over 120,000 sleeping rooms hence true to its acclaim of being the top and world class destination. Moreover, Location! Location!! Rosen Hotels is located in Central Florida, in the top tourist destination of the world hence it is in a position to serve a melting pot which then helps to determine if the sustainable efforts undertaken by this hospitality entity are popular, appreciated, condemned or unnoticed by the different kinds of guests. Rosen Hotels deems to identify itself as an upcoming green family hotel and thus serves a greater outlook and opportunity on presenting the perspectives of the guests from the convention and meetings category, mixed with holidaymakers' preferences when asked about their take on the green initiatives they have experienced during their stay within Rosen Hotels.

#### **Target Market**

The target market of this case study is the following:

- This case study can be used in the undergraduate level lodging operations courses.
- It can be used in graduate level strategic management and hotel management courses.
- It can also be used in workshops and training programs on environmental management and sustainability in the hotel industry.

## Educational Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Embrace sustainable development and understand its attributes in the hotel industry.
- Define and discuss new dimensions of sustainable development in the hotel industry.
- Discuss the role and importance of the engineering and human resources departments in when developing and implementing sustainability initiatives in hotel companies.

## Classroom Discussion

The instructor can facilitate classroom discussions by using the discussion questions stated above. Classroom discussions can focus on how the case study company initiated and implemented its sustainability efforts and what type of constrained they faced. Students can also be asked what can be learned from this case study. Finally, students may be asked to look at other hotel companies' sustainability efforts and report their findings to the class.

## Teaching Plan

**1 . Introduction and learning outcomes** (5-10 minutes)

**2. Short lecture with participation on sustainability in the hotel industry** (15-20 minutes)

**3. Group discussions (15-20 MINUTES)**

Students will be put into small groups (3-5 students) to discuss the attributes of sustainable development

- Ecological
- Economical
- Societal
- Human resources
- Wellness and healthcare

Each group will discuss each of the above dimensions and there will be a class discussion.

**4. Discussion of Rosen Hotels Case Study** (20-25 minutes)

- How did Rosen Hotels initiate and implement their sustainability initiatives?
- What type of constrains and challenges did Rosen Hotels face in their sustainability initiatives and how did they overcome them?
- What has been the role of Human Resources and Mr. Harris Rosen in initiating and implementing the sustainability efforts at Rosen Hotels?
- How did Rosen Hotels introduce "Human Resources" and "Wellness and Healthcare collaborative" initiatives as part of their sustainability efforts?
- How are the leading international hotel chains managing their sustainability efforts?

- What can we learn from this case study?

**5. Summary** (5-10 minutes)

- Restate the aims of the session.
- Summarize key issues related to sustainability in the hotel industry.
- Summarize the Rosen Hotels case study findings.
- Ask each student to state three interesting things they have learned during this session.
- Ask students whether they have any questions and comments.