

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Proactive preventive maintenance ensures lower capital costs and higher guest satisfaction.

GLENN HASEK

The link between a successful preventive maintenance (PM) program and a high level of guest satisfaction is irrefutable, but many hoteliers still fail to carry out successful PM on a consistent basis. The result is not only unhappy guests, but also higher capital costs due to equipment repair and replacement, higher employee turnover, increased energy costs and an unsafe working environment.

There are many reasons why PM is not done as often as it should. Last fall, a survey conducted by Dunedin, Fla.-based Mintek Mobile Data Solutions showed that a shortage of staff, lack of training, aging hotel issues, improper maintenance scheduling, lack of management commitment and poor record keeping all contribute to improper PM.

"I believe the real problem is the inability to oversee what is happening, because everything is on paper or you have to physically ask an engineer what he has been working on," says Mark Sokol, director of product marketing for Mintek Mobile Data Solutions. "Automation gives you the ability to manage, oversee the work being done and make accountability an issue."

M.P. Rama, AAHOA chairman and COO of JHM Enterprises in Greenville, S.C., agrees that having an efficient process in place is critical to the success of a PM program. At JHM, which owns and operates 29 hotels primarily in the Southeastern United States, the regional director of operations is responsi-

ble for making sure asset management takes place.

"We also have an asset manager at our company headquarters who visits each region on a regular basis," Rama says. "He works with each director of operations to ensure that our biggest assets are properly maintained and working correctly. At each hotel, we also have staff that performs PM on equipment and a specific number of guest rooms on a daily basis."

Rama says that JHM's approach toward PM is to "expect the unexpected."

"Anything that does not work will make guests unhappy," Rama says. "You have to spend upfront in order to save in the future. If you keep up with PM, your asset replacement costs will be manageable."

Rama says JHM's hotels are currently not using a PM hardware or software solution to carry out PM but many other hoteliers throughout the country have installed such systems. These types of solutions can add efficiencies to PM processes that historically have been paper-based.

The Wyndham New Orleans at Canal Place, for example, is using Mintek Mobile Data Solutions' WinTrack PM solution to conduct PM.



Mintek Mobile Data Solutions' WinTrack PM scanning device tracks preventive maintenance via barcodes placed on or near the equipment.

Instead of writing notes in notebooks, engineers use handheld scanning devices that read barcodes placed on or near equipment. Everything the engineer does or does not do is identified by the barcode. WinTrack PM is also used for rounds and room PMs.

"WinTrack PM ensures maintenance is getting done, standardizes maintenance task lists and helps managers better forecast staffing requirements," Sokol says.

Mintek recently expanded its automated PM offerings with the introduction of its Mintek Lodging Asset Management Suite. The Suite includes a Web-based ASP application that provides the ability to track thousands of assets at multiple properties.

"The Suite makes it easy for an asset manager at a hotel or management company to track any asset



WinTrack PM handheld PDA.

from purchase to its retirement," Sokol says. "What is unique about it is that it can track items such as furniture, equipment, beds or any other item throughout a system of hundreds of hotels."

In addition to Mintek's solution, Seattle-based Diversified Computer Corp., maker of GuestWare, also offers its own preventive maintenance system. It includes tools to plan, record and analyze the maintenance of hotel guestrooms. It installs with a recommended room PM checklist that can be used to create unlimited checklists. Checklists define when a room is due for PM and the tasks that need to be accomplished. After a room PM and inspection has been conducted, results are logged into GuestWare.

"I think having a formal guest room PM program should be a basic responsibility of any hotel management company," says Mike Benjamin, vice president of Diversified Computer Corp. "Regular room PM drives guest loyalty by reducing defects but it also increases productivity by being proactive instead of reactive. PM systems like GuestWare ensure that PM actually is get-

ting done."

WinTrack PM and GuestWare Preventive Maintenance both provide the ability to generate work orders and produce reports that enable continuous analysis of PM progress, equipment and room defects.

No matter what type of PM

process or system one uses, Rama says a hotelier's No. 1 goal should be to maintain assets now in order to keep capital expenditures in check later. If that happens, it makes sense that guests will stay satisfied and keep coming back again and again.

ALB

INCREASE ROOM RATE AND OCCUPANCY



Split Screen:

Both the TV and Internet on the same screen



Internet Screen



Television Screen



Bluetooth Wireless Keyboard & Mouse
* Up to 30 ft. range

- LCD HDTV'S IN SIZES FROM 27", 30", 32" & 37"
- FULL INTERNET ACCESS - HELPS INCREASE REVENUE
- INCLUDES INSTALLATION AND WALL MOUNTS
- UP TO 5 YEAR WARRANTY AVAILABLE
- FIRST YEAR ON-SITE SUPPORT, UNDER WARRANTY
- FINANCING AVAILABLE UP TO 60 MONTHS O.A.C.

PHONE: 888.360.4035
FAX: 949.270.3678
6408 CITY LIGHTS DRIVE
ALISO VIEJO, CA 92656

DHAR PATEL - EXT. 3
ROBERT HARRIS - EXT 4
WWW.ROOMCONX.COM
SALES@ROOMCONX.COM