Is Operating Sustainably Important for Vancouver’s Luxury Hotel Industry?
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INTRODUCTION
As one of Canada’s major harbor cities and economic centers, Vancouver has many domestic and foreign tourists every year. There were more than 10.3 million tourists visited the city last year; tourism provides Vancouver with $4.8 billion in profits and more than 70,000 full-time jobs every year. While traveling in Vancouver, tourists can choose a local hotel as a temporary accommodation. In 2016, Canadian hotels have a monthly occupancy rate of up to 77.5 percent. The hotel industry is developing very well in Vancouver. At the same time, Vancouver attracts some wealthy people for leisure or business travel. These people are willing to pay high prices to live in a hotel providing high quality service, such as luxury hotels. For these reasons, the luxury hotel industry is also very marketable. However, a large amount of household garbage and pollutants are generated when operating a hotel. Therefore, many luxury hotels develop sustainability to achieve this goal of becoming the world’s greenest city by 2020.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Human actions have caused many environmental problems such as the greenhouse effect, destruction of the ozone layer, over-exploitation of fisheries and agriculture, and overuse of chemical products (Oskamp, 2000, p. 496-508).
- Millar and Park (2013) said that “sustainability” means development can meet the needs of human beings today, but it will not harm the future development of humanity (p.80).
- Derom, Maurer and VanWynsbergeheb (2012) said that a city needs to develop its environmental, economic and social sustainability together as long as the city becomes a truly sustainable city (p.191).

HOW THE HOTEL INDUSTRY DEVELOPS SUSTAINABILITY

- The reuse of towels and bed linens is the most representative best practice action of the hospitality industry in terms of sustainability. The reason is they can be reused for other guests after being washed.
- Many hotels in China offer guests some disposable items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste and house slippers. However, most hotels in North America do not provide guests with toothpaste. From a sustainability point of view, not providing these disposable items helps the hotel reduce expenses and protect the local environment.
- Some hotels have started to install water-saving devices to decrease the amount of water used by guests and staff. Installing water-saving devices such as low-flow shower heads and aerated faucets can help the hotel save $1.50 for each room in every month. After replacing water-efficient toilets, the hotel saved 180,000 gallons of water in one year. More importantly, regardless of the fact that it costs a lot of money to install these devices, the hotel can recover the costs in a matter of years. After making up the cost, the hotel can save money while using less water.
- Other local hotels need to research and learn from the hotels that have achieved major breakthroughs in sustainability. Sustainable luxury hotels need to invest more money for studying new technologies and come up with more sustainable ways of doing business. More importantly, these sustainable hotels need to learn about technologies that have not been widely used in the hotel industry but have been used by companies developing in other fields for sustainable development.

HOW FIVE GREEN KEY HOTELS DEVELOPS SUSTAINABILITY

The hotel industry in Vancouver uses the Green Eco-Leaf Rating Program and the Hotel Association of Canada’s Green Key Rating Program to evaluate whether a hotel is a sustainable hotel and environmentally friendly. The Fairmont Waterfront, Four Seasons Hotel Vancouver, Fairmont Pacific Rim and Hyatt Regency Vancouver are hotels in Vancouver that have received five green keys.

- The Fairmont Waterfront Hotel has a roof garden that supplies products for the hotel kitchen, an apiary producing honey, and waste recycling.
- Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel organizes public clean up of local beaches, provides bicycles for guests for convenient, environmentally friendly transportation, and provides an iPad 2 device for guests to reduce consumption of paper used for newspapers and magazines.
- Hyatt Regency Vancouver purchases energy from Bullfrog Power, a ‘green’ energy company that reduces fossil fuel use.
- Four Seasons Vancouver uses lighting that reduces energy consumption, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions and saves money. The hotel also has reduced the use of plastic and recycles newspapers.

CUSTOMER EXPECTATION & SATISFACTION

Corporate social responsibility is a moral or ideological theory that focuses on how corporations change the quality of life in local communities and society as a whole while they are developing their economy. Many people are concerned about environmental sustainability. Thus, when the luxury hotel industry takes a lot of environmental protection measures, guests and locals will think this hotel is very socially responsible in terms of sustainability.

Fortunately, guests staying in luxury hotels are more likely to pay a fee for green practices than those staying in low-end hotels. This is because guests who choose to live in the high-quality service hotel have sufficient finances, and they wish to live in a safe environment. Their beliefs and values make them feel that their health is valuable, so they will pay to protect it.

The development of sustainability also meets the customer’s expectations of the hotel’s sustainability. 53 percent of survey respondents said they are more willing to spend money on a sustainable business. Those who like to live in luxury hotels pay more attention to the hotel’s amenities, environment, safety and reputation than to the hotel’s room rate.

THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LUXURY HOTEL INDUSTRY

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CONCLUSION
Sustainability helps luxury hotels stay competitive by lowering costs and increasing environmental protection through different measures. From a competitive edge point of view, guest satisfaction will not be decreased by sustainability. Simultaneously, sustainability enhances the luxury hotel’s reputation and profits by establishing a sense of corporate social responsibility. For these reasons, the luxury hotel industry needs to develop sustainability in order to reduce the damage and destruction caused to the environment by environmental problems and to meet the city’s demands for local sustainable businesses so that Vancouver can be the world’s greenest city by 2020.