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## Hotel Recycling Case Study

*Supportive workplace culture leads to local and community engagement*

### Sheraton Colonial Hotel and Conference Center, Wakefield, MA

*Summary: Sheraton Colonial (SC) of Wakefield has been cultivating a culture of reuse and recycling for years. Since 2008, recycling bins have been present in every guest room, while all left-over soap, shampoo and conditioners are currently being donated for reuse. Employee Sustainability Champions are recognized each month via The Employee Care Rally, which promotes a supportive workplace. The hotel donates deposits from soda cans to charities.*

**Business Profile:** The Wakefield location manages 280 guest rooms and 15 suites with fewer than 100 employees. The facility includes an Executive Conference Center featuring 22 event spaces with a capacity for approximately 200 people, as well as ballrooms suited for approximately 360 people. The hotel also features the Colonial Bar & Grill restaurant and pub. Sheraton is one of nine brands housed under The Starwood Hotels and Resorts umbrella.

**Motivators:** Starwood's 30/20/20 goal, to reduce consumption of energy by 30% and water by 20% from 2008 levels by the year 2020, initiated SC's promotion of sustainable practices. They were further encouraged with assistance from Waste Management's (WM) Total Recycle Program, which helped identify additional recycling opportunities, leading to dramatic improvements, especially in the kitchen. Waste diversion goals include reaching a 25% recycling rate for 2013.

**Program Evaluation:** Kitchens and guest rooms are the main sources of waste for the hotel. Every guest room has a recycling bin which a housekeeper collects and then empties into a separate bag on cleaning carts.

The hotel currently collects paper, plastic, aluminum, glass and cardboard in a single stream program. Those recyclables are placed in 'Slim Jim' bins located on every other guest floor and are emptied into larger recycling totes on the 2nd floor, which are serviced weekly. The hotel has gradually increased recycling capacity over the program's history. The program started off with one 6 yard container and within 4 years, has graduated to two 10 yard containers for recycling. There is also separate

**Q: WHICH ITEMS SHOULD SHERATON COLONIAL RECYCLE...**

**A: ALL OF THESE!**



*"Recycling is an opportunity to reduce costs while benefiting the environment"*

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Sheraton Colonial Recycling Signage



Sheraton Colonial Sustainability Champions

collection for universal waste, such as light bulbs and batteries. Energy savings were realized by replacing halogen bulbs in all conference spaces with LEDs, and CFLs replaced incandescent bulbs in all guest rooms.

SC participates in Starwood sustainability programs such as Clean the World and Make a Green Choice. Clean The World donates left-over soap, shampoo and conditioner to relief shelters in the United States and to over 45 different countries for reuse. The Make a Green Choice Program helps guests and the hotel conserve energy, water, detergent, cleaning products and toiletry supplies via voluntary linen and room service.

**Signage:** SC uses various types of signage to further promote their recycling efforts. Color and visuals incorporated with pictures of hotel specific materials are very useful in diversion efforts.

**Successes:** Each month, SC diverts 2.1 tons of recyclable material from the landfill. This amount would fill 9 cubic yards of landfill space and equates to enough space to meet the disposal needs of a community of 140 people. SC was named the winner of Waste Management & Starwood 2012 Total Recycle Program Challenge for the month of July, which is based on the largest percentage decrease of trash among participants. The Sheraton Colonial reduced their waste by 55% with a year end waste diversion of 16.97%.

**Cultivating a supportive culture:** Each month SC holds an Employee Care Rally, a lively and interactive sit-down buffet. The Rally includes the general manager's communication, recognizes employees who provided service 'above and beyond', names the Sustainability Champions, and identifies a local or global community engagement project. The general manager reviews recycling and sustainability practices at this event, as well as recycling orientation for new employees.

**Challenges to overcome:** In order to have everyone on the same page, constant communication has been integral to success. Continual re-training and education of employees has been important, as well as focusing on employee engagement and supervision. Convenience for kitchen and housekeeping staff in placement of bins, containers and signage has also helped to increase diversion rates.

**Future Initiatives:** SC is now looking into ways to divert its kitchen food waste. If you would like to receive assistance for diverting your facility's food waste, please visit [www.recyclingworksma.com](http://www.recyclingworksma.com) or call 1(888)254-5525 for more information.

**Sheraton Colonial Monthly Waste Diversion:**

