

From OPHell to OPL: how hotels can implement quality laundry facilities

How did you
rate your stay?



By Simon Hart,
national account
manager at the
Professional division
of Miele

In a Miele survey of 100 UK hotel workers, we found that cleanliness is the top priority among guests. This means that hoteliers should invest in quality on-premise laundry (OPL) equipment to ensure that bed linen and towels are thoroughly cleaned.

But an OPL will only be a success if hoteliers pay careful consideration to the machines they have in place. If not, an OPL won't work to the hotel's advantage. Here are some dangers of poor OPL equipment, and how hoteliers can ensure that they use machines that don't pose these risks:-



High costs



Slow room
turnaround times



Poor quality
washes



Inefficient laundry
processes



Long periods
of downtime

Good value for money is a hotelier's top requirement when looking for new laundry equipment, according to our survey. Despite this, only a third are happy with the cost of their machines. The key is to invest in laundry equipment that can withstand constant use and promise longevity. Commercial washing machines and dryers are tested to last longer than domestic ones, and while this can be the more expensive option, it pays off in the long-term as the hotel won't need to pay for an OPL upgrade so soon.

Two thirds
of our survey
were **unhappy**
with their
machine
costs

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Our survey found that laundry turnaround time is the most common laundry challenge for hotel staff, as stated by nearly half of those we surveyed.

Without washing bed linen and towels, and returning them to rooms in time for check-in, guests won't get into their rooms at the time they were promised, impacting on customer service. Extensive delays may even result in the hotel not being able to rent the room out at all. A commercial washing machine and tumble dryer can help with this, and carry out laundry quicker than domestic equipment, without compromising on the quality of the washing and drying processes. As a result, guest check-in times won't be affected.

49%

said laundry
turnaround for
check in was a
challenge



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One of the most common cleanliness complaints according to the hotel workers we surveyed are about stains on bed linen, stated by nearly one in five. There's a good chance that an ageing, worn-out machine no longer performs well and doesn't clean items thoroughly enough, leaving dirty marks on bed linen and towels. TripAdvisor has many bad hotel reviews slamming poor standards of hygiene, so to avoid being named and shamed, hoteliers should invest in a machine that can provide quality washes time and time again. It's also key for the hotel to choose an equipment supplier who can provide hotel staff with training to get the OPL running effectively, and reduce the chances of permanent stains.

18%

of guest
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Efficiency is another top factor that affects a washing machine purchase decision; 63% of hotel workers we surveyed said that it's important to them. Some washing machines don't offer an extensive range of programmes that wash items according to how dirty they are. This means hotels are using as much energy and water for once-used bed linen as they would for particularly dirty linen, wasting energy and water.

It's key to look for a commercial machine with a variety of programmes - for more heavily soiled items and also economical options for less soiled items. Hotel managers should also see how brands and models compare when it comes to water and energy usage, and how effective they are when washing at lower temperatures.

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Our survey found that when it comes to operating an OPL, reliability is the top factor as stated by 54%. Broken washing machines and tumble dryers forces the hotel to outsource laundry. As a result, they have to factor in time travelling to and from the launderette, and wait around for bed linen and towels to be washed and dried if carrying this out themselves. Not only that, they don't have control of the laundry process and therefore can't control the care that the items receive and the quality of the wash.

Hotel managers should buy from a brand or retailer that promises service call-outs within 24-48 hours whenever a repair is needed and has a high first time fix rate.

54%

said reliability
was a major
factor