

INNOVATION SENSATION

A closer look at some creative manufacturers whose linen innovations are helping the environment while saving hoteliers money without sacrificing guest satisfaction

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Providing cost-effective hotel linens that don't sacrifice guest comfort and do little harm to the environment during production can be a real test for manufacturers. But it is a challenge to which some have risen.

Green Friendly

During its conference last fall, Best Western announced a new partnership with Enova Textile to provide environmentally-friendly towels produced with what's called the Enova Process.

Through the Enova Process, pre-consumer textile "waste" is collected from a closed-factory environment. The "waste" cotton goes through a corn-based "bleaching" process, whereby the cotton fibers are opened, carded and brought to the "sliver" state. The fibers are then spun into regenerated cotton yarn, which is then knit or woven into fabrics.

In Best Western's case, the result is green towels optimized for each of the brand's three descriptors.

"It makes such a beautiful towel," David Middleberg, director of global sourcing and manufacturing for Star Linen and Supply, said. "Even as compared to brown cotton products, we are able to produce a softer product."

Star Linens and Supply offers the Marquis Green Terry Collection, towels created with the Enova Process that look and feel like towels hotels use every day but with no pesticides, fertilizers, land use or wasted water.

"We tried to match different tiers in the market, from mid-tier utilitarian towels, and work from there up, trying to match brown cotton standards," Middleberg said.

Initial feedback from Best Western members on the green towel program has been positive, with hoteliers calling the product fluffier, bigger, thicker, and long-lasting.

Going the Distance

Seeking a way to make hotel sheeting and terry products last longer, Ohio-based Standard Textile developed the Centium Core Technology, a patented weaving process that improves tensile strength.

"Centium Core Technology is the thread that binds that best on-the-body feel to the most enduring on-the-books performance," Greg Eubanks, group vice president of Hospitality Sales & Marketing for Standard, said. "Standard Textile incorporates a patented micro-filament into the many products we offer, and this patented construction provides unparalleled strength that traditional construction cannot offer."

Eubanks noted that products with the Centium Core Technology last anywhere from 35 percent to 237 percent longer than traditional woven products.

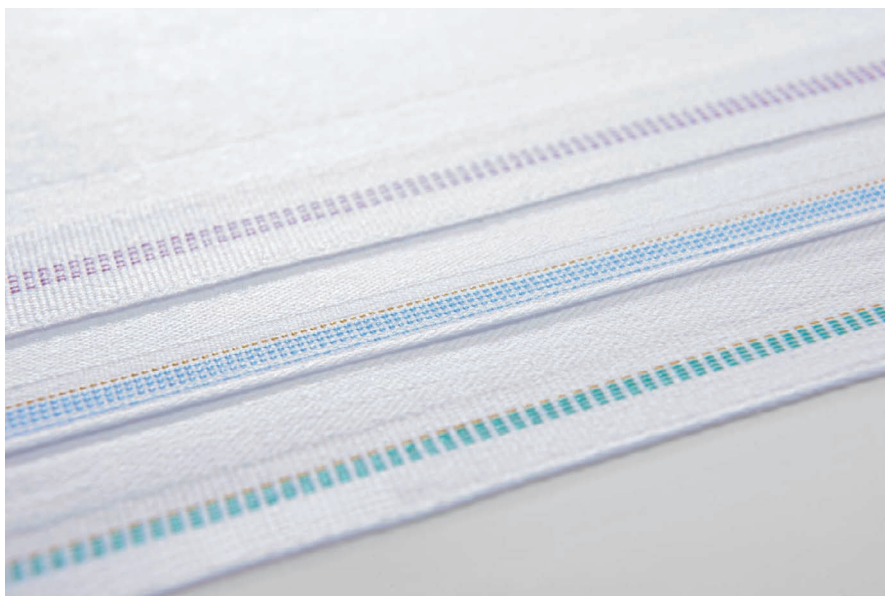
Time is Money

Other Standard Textile innovations

enhance the guest experience and reduce operational costs. For example, the OneStep for Sheeting and Terry utilizes color-coded selvage yarns that make sheet sizes and towel weights easier to identify. The sheets also come with center lock labels that help housekeeping identify the sheet's center while the towels are designed to eliminate "whiskering."

"Many of our clients save upwards of three minutes per room in housekeeping and laundry time by utilizing the benefits of the OneStep system," Eubanks said.

The OneStep system is the result of a partnership between Standard Textile and La Quinta Inns & Suites, who was looking for ways to improve operational efficiencies in company-owned properties. "We know that every minute of housekeeping time per room equals \$1.5 million annually in cost. Anything we can do to enhance the guest experience while simultaneously creating laundry and/or housekeeping efficiencies is a



The OneStep Sheeting program from Standard Textile incorporates color coding like this to help housekeeping easily identify sheet sizes, improving operational efficiencies.

win-win,” Angelo Lombardi, La Quinta’s COO, said.

As a result, La Quinta now saves approximately 50 cents each time it makes up a room using a OneStep product.

Clean Getaway?

To create further operational savings, Standard Textile developed the integrated Bed Scarf, an all-in-one construction that combines the bed scarf and top cover, eliminating the need to purchase or dry clean a separate bed scarf.

Eubanks said the idea came to pass after Standard Textile met with a client who had an unusual problem with separate bed scarfs.

“The bed scarf that they placed on the top of the bed had an acquisition cost of anywhere from \$35 to \$75, depending on the room scheme,” he said. “The problem was that after the guest departed, the scarf wasn’t always left in the room. In essence, they were seeing some ‘mysterious disappearance’ for which they had not previously budgeted.”

With the Standard Textile solution, hotels don’t have to worry about bed scarfs going missing and ensure cleanliness.

“Most guests perceive that a separate, colored bed scarf has not been washed recently,” Eubanks said. “Whether that is true or not, guests have seen enough ‘Dateline’ and ‘60 Minutes’ ‘black light’ specials to be skeptical. The integrated bed scarf is washed every guest stay, and the guest perceives that it is clean, fresh and hygienic when compared to a traditional bed scarf.”



The Integrated Bed Scarf from Standard Textile ensures thorough cleanliness and prevents “mysterious disappearances”