A Greener Laundry Starts With Clear Goals

By Kim Shady
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I relish the times when I get out of the office to visit functioning laundries and speak with those in charge of the operations as well as the employees. These visits are important to see our company’s equipment in action. I always leave having learned something or at the very least having had a key point reinforced.

Recently, my travels took me to Cavallo Point-The Lodge at Golden Gate in Sausalito, Calif. This unique, 142-room luxury hotel resort property, located in the shadow of the Golden Gate Bridge, has fully embraced green. Their task was tall and goals lofty in embarking on a $100 million rehabilitation project that transformed historic Fort Baker into this fabulous resort. Green is omnipresent—from heavy use of LED lighting and organic linens to a restaurant that emphasizes locally grown, fresh ingredients to reduce the impact of transporting items over long distances. The result is a harmony between luxury and green. It’s a spectacular property filled with great features and it is also an excellent example of what can happen when a property fully embraces green (evidenced by it awaiting LEED certification).

The laundry held special interest for me. I see it as a microcosm of what Cavallo Point has done from the start. It set clear goals and took the time to get everybody on the same page and committed to those goals. Something we can all learn from.

Their goals were to reduce water consumption, curb energy use, limit the wastewater the laundry sent into the system and produce a high quality finish on the organic linens they would choose. That was the commitment from the start, and I think that’s the key in getting everyone on the same page. It made other decisions easier. Too often, the approach is, we have X dollars to spend, how efficient can we make our laundry?

Water Reuse System in Place

The cornerstone of Cavallo’s laundry is a water reuse system. The system they chose utilizes a 10-micron shaker filter, which removes particulate. Next, water is run through a 5-micron backwash filter followed by an ultraviolet disinfection process before being reintroduced into the wash wheel.
With that decision made, it was easy to select laundry equipment that would work in concert with the system. But again, they had to revisit their set goals and ensure the equipment didn’t just work with the system, but offered features that would contribute to the goals of efficiency and quality results.

Knowing they wanted to reduce gas consumption, Cavallo made high G-force extraction a feature equipment needed to have to reduce drying time. Equally important would be a high-performance water heating system. Knowing high quality was non-negotiable, they made programmability another key feature to give them total control of the wash and dry processes.

Next came the chemical component. They worked closely with their representative to ensure the right chemicals were being used in the proper cycles and temperatures to yield superior results on their organic linen, and of course extend their life.

**Water & Energy Savings**

And the results? Cavallo’s laundry reuses 70 percent of its wash water. Programming has enabled staff to fine-tune cycles further to reduce water use and deliver superb cleaning results. A 300 G-force extract cycle has meant many types of linen require little to no drying. And a pair of ironers put the finishing touches on the procedure, giving linens a high quality finish.

The point of this example is that incorporating green in your laundry does not happen by accident. It is a result of very clear goals from the start. It comes by working with distributors who you can trust and who are just as committed to your needs. And it’s a product of all these players working together, which is made easier by the predefined goals.

Don’t ever just buy laundry equipment (or any supplies) without thinking about how it will work within your operation. Match it against your goals. This is imperative if you are operating a green property, because not all equipment is equal. Often it is the lower-priced machines that end up costing your operation efficiency over the long run.

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