



Green Lodging, Get Certified Before Your Competition

Date: 2010-11-17

The 411 on Top Green Hotel Certifications

The race continues as hotels strive to one-up their competition. In January we had published an investigative article on [green hotel certifications](#) exploring various angles of “why certify” and details of major certification programs. As the number of green certification programs continues to grow, we want to revisit some of the prominent certifications that continue to lead the hospitality lodging industry on the green trend.

Compared to the beginning of the year, hoteliers have more options than ever when it comes to selecting which green lodging certification program to participate and obtain. From established worldwide green certification programs to the recent state versions, analyzing the options could be overwhelming. The key factor in selecting the appropriate program is to ensure it provides absolute value through quantifiable results (ie. energy usage, cost reduction, guest satisfaction, etc). We recommend our clients to start with a [hotel energy benchmarking](#) and tracking system.

Are you in? Standing on the sidelines can cost you money in the long run. While obtaining a green certification is not mandatory, it could mean you are missing out on some great benefits, which include:



- Reduced operating costs
- Improve the bottom line
- Demonstrate leadership in sustainability
- Enhanced reputation, brand and market value
- Federal and state tax benefits
- Reduction of green house emissions
- Attract eco-conscious travelers
- Healthier environment for employees and guests
- Attraction and retraction of talent

There are a variety of green certifications that can denote that a hotel is implementing specific green practices, however each program has a different focus, different priorities and different standards -- no two are alike. In a recent article published by Hotel & Leisure Advisors, four aspects have been identified to distinguish the focus of green certification programs: “These broad categories consist of certifications for overall building structures, the building fixtures themselves, building operations, and overall management practices.”

Keeping these categories in mind, the following are top green lodging certification programs (in alphabetical order):

- **Audubon Green Leaf™** Eco-Rating Program: (www.greenleaf.auduboninternational.org) This program works with hotels to ensure that they are using green practices in their upkeep and everyday running of the establishment. A tiered certification program where environmental measures are evaluated according to: water quality, water conservation, waste minimization, resource conservation, and energy efficiency.

Rating: One to Five ‘Green Leafs’

Recognized/Chosen by: The State of New York as statewide hospitality ‘greening’ goal.

- **EcoRooms® & EcoSuites™:** (www.ecorooms.com) Certified properties must meet eight strict eco-criteria for membership and certification. The criteria includes: use of Green Seal certified cleaning and paper products, towel and linen reuse program, recyclable waste program, energy efficient lighting, high efficiency plumbing, and 100% smoke-free properties.

Rating: Must meet all eight program requirements

Recognized/Chosen by: American Hotel and Lodging Association (AH&LA) and the American Automobile Association (AAA).

- **EPA's Energy Star label:** (www.energystar.gov) The Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program enables buildings to qualify through meeting strict energy performance standards. Energy Star labeled properties use less energy, have reduced operating expenses, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. To be certified, the property must attain a minimum score of 75, the top 25%, based on EPA's National Energy Performance Rating System. As of November 2010, there are 426 Energy Star labeled U.S. hotels.

Rating: Must obtain a score of 75 or higher

- **Green Globe Certification:** (www.greenglobecertification.com) This is a certification label for sustainability in both management and operations. Certification criteria cover several areas, including sustainable management and social economic, cultural heritage, and environmental aspects of sustainability. The program's criteria are also updated annually to ensure international compliance.

Rating: Must achieve threshold of at least 35% of the total 1,000 points

- **Green Key®:** (www.greenkeyglobal.com) The Eco-Rating program is specifically designed for hotel operations to rank, certify and inspect green initiatives. Based upon a comprehensive environmental self-assessment, hotels are ranked and provided with guidance on how to "unlock" opportunities. The program assesses the five main operational areas of a property and covers nine sustainable practices. An on-site inspection may be conducted to confirm green hotel rating.

Rating: One to Five Green Keys

Recognized/Chosen by: Carlson Hotels, Hyatt Hotels, Motel 6, MGM Resorts International, Sofitel, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts and Accor in the U.S/North America region.

- **Green Seal certification:** (www.greenseal.org) This tiered certification is presented to those lodging properties that achieve various levels of compliance with GS-33, Green Seal Environmental Leadership Standard for Lodging Properties. Properties must demonstrate science-based evaluation of sustainable practices in following areas: waste minimization, energy efficiency, conservation and management, management of fresh water resources, wastewater management, hazardous substances, and environmentally conscious purchasing.

Rating: Bronze, Silver or Gold Levels

Recognized/Chosen by: The city of Los Angeles through its Green Business Initiative, as well as Chicago through its Green Hotels Initiative.

- **USGBC LEED® certification:** (www.usgbc.org/leed) The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED gives building owners and operators the tools they need to have an immediate and measurable impact on their buildings' performance. Promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

Rating: Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum Levels

About EcoGreenHotel

EcoGreenHotel LLC is a privately held company dedicated to helping lodging facilities address a broad spectrum of sustainability issues. The company provides information, tools, checklists, current news and trends to the hospitality industry through its website, www.EcoGreenHotel.com. The company also runs an online marketplace for green products and services at www.EcoGreenHotelStore.com. In addition to the online offerings, EcoGreenHotel provides customized consulting services tailored to the needs of the hospitality industry in the areas of energy efficiency and certifications, including LEED, Green Seal and Energy Star. For those properties that have reached certified levels of sustainability, EcoGreenHotel assists with marketing services to position the properties within the growing "green" space and enhance revenue. For further information, email info@EcoGreenHotel.com or call 888-229-0213.

About Author

Susan Patel, VP of Technologies & Communications. Leads business development and operations and is the Site Director and Managing Editor of EcoGreenHotel online publications.

This article comes from Hotel News Resource
<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com>

The URL for this story is:
<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article50258.html>