



Raising the Table Stakes

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Members of FreshStay.com push for innovations to improve indoor air quality in hotels.

"In a few years, improving indoor air quality will be to hotels what air bags were to cars," says Dennis Quaintance, CEO & CDO (Chief Design Officer) for Quaintance-Weaver Restaurants & Hotels. "It's going to go from something that nobody was thinking about to table stakes – something that everybody must have."

At the [Proximity Hotel](#) in Greensboro, N.C., Quaintance is already pushing that future closer to reality. As the first Platinum LEED certified hotel in the U.S., the Proximity built better air quality directly into its design.

At the Proximity, 30 percent more fresh air is circulated throughout the building. Carbon dioxide levels are continuously monitored at four locations and an alarm is sent if any readings exceed 1,500 ppm.

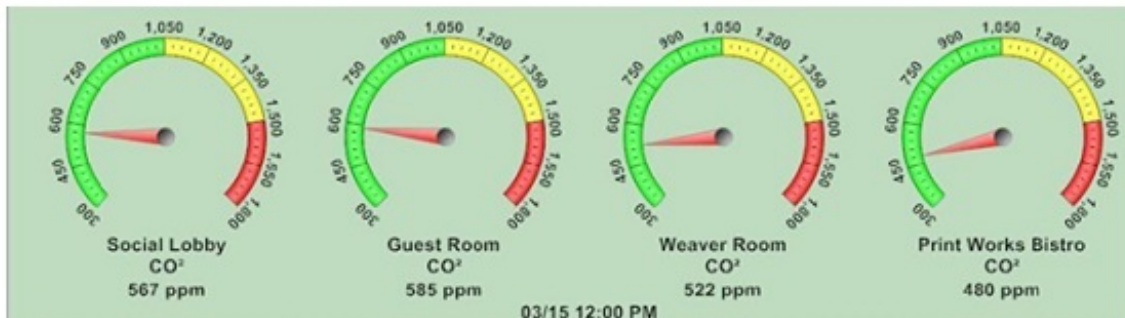
"I'm not a scientist, but what I do know is that I sleep better, feel better with the windows of my house open," says Quaintance. "We brought that idea into the hotel by circulating outside air in, and we do it without wasting energy."

"We have guests tell us, 'I breathe so well here,' – but they have no idea why until we tell them."

The Proximity Hotel is one of the growing members of FreshStay.com who are committed to promoting the improvement of indoor air quality for Frequent Breathers™ worldwide. FreshStay is the world's leading online directory of 100% smoke-free hotels, connecting you with fast, easy and secure online booking.

"Poor indoor air quality can have a major impact on guest satisfaction and employee health," says Ray Burger, President of Pineapple Hospitality and Founder of FreshStay.com. "A few years ago, a major hospitality industry study found that more than two-thirds of frequent travelers were concerned about air quality, and 60 percent indicated they had suffered poor sleep, a runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, headache, cough or sore throat as a result of staying in a hotel room with poor indoor air quality."

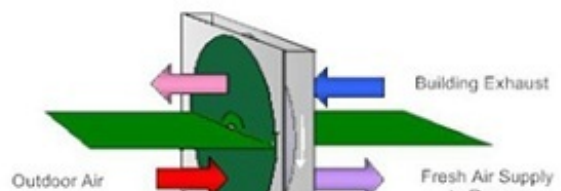
"We believe that good indoor air quality starts with a 100% smoke-free property. But more and more, we're finding our FreshStay.com members are going above and beyond to improve air quality at their properties."



The Proximity Hotel places CO₂ monitors in all densely occupied spaces and air flow measurement devices in all non-densely occupied spaces that measured the minimum airflow with an accuracy of plus/minus 15%. These monitors give feedback on the ventilation levels to aid occupant comfort.

Extra Steps

Along with being smoke-free and monitoring CO₂ with sensors, the Proximity's indoor air quality enhancements are part of a total sustainability program at the hotel. The energy recovery wheel that brings in outside air also keeps moisture levels low so that there is no mold growth. Low VOC adhesives, sealants and sealant primers were used everywhere in the building, as well as low VOC paints, floor coatings, stains and sealers. Even the carpet and carpet cushions were selected based on the Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label Plus program.



"If I could cause our guests to sleep better, feel better, breathe

easier and have a better day, then I'm improving our hotel's value," says Quaintance. "We plan to own these hotels a long time, and our headlights need to shine 15 years down the road. We don't want to own a hotel where we can't modify it or take it where we want to go. Because this is where the industry is headed and this is where we need to be."

Beyond the potential for a bad guest experience, poor air quality can have other long-term consequences, such as increased building energy and maintenance costs, damaged wallpaper, mold, warped furnishings and respiratory illness – particularly for hotel staff.

To improve air quality and provide a better guest experience, a growing number of hotels have taken the extra step of adding "PURE guest rooms" that provide an allergy-friendly environment.

PURE rooms undergo a special purification process, in which each room is treated systematically to remove allergens and irritants from all surfaces, fabrics and air flow. These cutting-edge [PURE rooms](#) provide hypo-allergenic hotel accommodations for travelers suffering from allergies or asthma.

"Statistically, one-third of travelers report having allergies or traveling with family members who have allergic reactions," said Brian Brault, chief executive officer of PURE Solutions. "PURE is committed to offering the best air quality for any hotel guest, allergy sufferers or not."

Other hotels are making indoor air quality a more important aspect of property design.

"People want to be in a clean hotel room," says Anthony Brenner, founder and lead designer of Push Design Push, an Asheville, N.C.-based sustainable design and development company. "It started with non-smoking rooms, floors and properties. Next came non-toxic rooms. What we are going to see next is the trend toward healthy hotels – ones that are entirely designed and built using low-impact, toxin-free strategies."

At Push Design, Brenner insists on using only natural, non-chemical-based building materials. His breathable wall system better circulates air from the outside in, modulating temperature and moisture, allowing for better energy efficiency and preventing the possibility of mold growth.

"We spend 90 percent of our time indoors, in rooms where the same air is trapped inside, relying on mechanical systems for what little circulation occurs," says Brenner. "We're breathing in materials that we may find out in 30 or 40 years were affecting our bodies in ways we didn't even think about it. Better indoor air quality leads to better health. It helps you sleep better, feel better, live better."

"Because of advancements in technology like these being made today, I can see a day in the future when guests can and will want to monitor the indoor air quality in their guestroom either with devices that are provided by the hotel or via an app on their own technology," says Burger. "There's no understating how key indoor air quality will be to the future of hospitality."

Indoor Air Quality Tips

Scott Parisi of [EcoGreenHotel](#) lists several good ideas for green hotels to improve their indoor air quality:

1. Clean all the parts of air system: All parts of the heating and the air system including coils, ducts and fans must be cleaned thoroughly.
2. Clean the upholstery: Upholstery on the sofas, chairs, carpets etc must be cleaned.
3. High Ozone shock treatment: To kill any remaining bacteria or mold in the room, it is necessary that a high ozone shock treatment is completed.
4. Apply a pure shield to the room: To prevent microorganisms away from getting attached to the surfaces, shielding the room with a spray that forms an electrostatic barrier is a must.
5. Air Purifying System: An air purifying system (filtering system) helps to remove about 98-100% of bacteria and keeps the room allergy free.
6. Encasing mattresses and pillows: Mattresses and pillows encased in coverings help prevent dust mites from causing allergy.
7. Use allergy-friendly cleaners: For keeping the room healthy for allergy sufferers, rooms should be cleaned with allergy friendly cleaners.

The folks from Somelikeitgreen.com suggest using plants as a cost-effective solution to indoor air pollution.

"Did you know that plants clean the air by exchanging fresh oxygen for stale carbon dioxide? The veneer of your desk, a box of tissue, the paneling on your wall and even the carpet you walk on are all sources of noxious gases that can cause headaches, nausea and long-term illness."



Because the Proximity Hotel installed a large energy recovery unit, there is no energy penalty for bringing in more outside air.

Dr. B.C. Wolverton, the scientist who directed a NASA investigation of living plants' effectiveness in cleaning indoor air stated, "Plants should not be considered a total solution for indoor air quality problems, but should be recognized as part of the solution." He went on to say, "If you put plants in buildings, will it help improve air quality? We say, from our tests, yes indeed. The more foliage, the healthier the environment is going to be."

Finally, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection says that hotel facility management should make indoor air quality a top priority, "because it can impact many areas of operation. Not only are guest impacted by poor air quality but so are employees, equipment efficiencies, insurance premiums and ultimately the facility's profitability."

Their suggestions include:

- Develop a plan for providing for and improving the indoor air quality of the facility.
- Communicate indoor air quality policies to guest, employees, vendors, suppliers and contractors.
- Eliminate any cause of mold and mildew.
- Properly vent areas, such as kitchens and laundries that have inherent indoor air quality issues.
- Use environmentally preferable cleaners, whenever feasible.
- Properly label, store, track and dispose of all chemicals.
- Use integrated pest management to control pests.
- Regularly test for hazardous substances such as radon, carbon monoxide, lead and asbestos.
- Use low or no volatile organic compound (VOC) paints and finishes.
- And, of course, maintain a 100 percent smoke-free facility.

More tips can be found at www.dep.state.fl.us/greenlodging/bmp_indoor.htm

About Pineapple Hospitality

Headquartered in Saint Charles, Missouri, Pineapple Hospitality™ brings fresh ideas to hospitality guests' doors and owner/operators' bottom lines — including FreshStay® (www.freshstay.com), EcoRooms & EcoSuites (www.EcoRooms.com), Environmentally Sensitive Amenities™, EO®, ecossential elements, Sonoma Soap Co. , Earth Perfect, Earth Simple, Save Your World, Pharmacopia, and greenSPA™ amenities, AVIVA and WAVE dispensers, Energy Efficient Lighting and Controls, Custom Linen & Towel Re-Use Programs, Green Earth Key Cards, Sleeves and Folders, Energy Management Systems and Controls, High Performance showerheads, Zero Odor, and dozens of other products and programs. For more information, please visit www.pineapplehospitality.net, or call us at 636-922-2285.

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