

Finally, A Real Lasting Solution For Hotel Drinking Water Systems

Our situation is extremely worrying: Indonesia is considered the second worst plastic polluter of the oceans after China, which is both practically and image wise, very damaging as some islands fully depend on tourism. And the hospitality industry itself is a major part of the cause, with 10,000 hotels giving plastic bottles of water in every room every day. That means in excess of 1,000,000,000 plastic bottles to be disposed of every year from hotels alone. We have to find a way to stop this entirely.



The second possibility is that the full glass bottle suppliers also collect, wash, sanitize, refill and return, which is what used to happen- even with soft drink bottles – 50 years ago. But even then we are faced with the carbon footprint of the transportation to and from the bottling plant and the relabeling etc process. It is still not perfect, even if they did it – which we have no evidence to support that they do consistently.

That means any glass bottles are going to be collected by the so-called “informal sector” of garbage pickers and recycled, which again is “okay” but the energy to make glass bottles and to crush, melt and remake them, is many times the energy to make plastic bottles. So again we hit a roadblock which in combination with the much greater expense of glass bottles water, means this is not general solution for the industry, only the top end who can afford it.

So what are we to do? The environmental lobby says “no plastic bottles”, and the consumer is beginning to agree. The effort to fill, let’s say 1000-2000 bottles a day

But the arguments rage on: remove all plastic bottles from hotels and restaurants, replace with glass bottles and refill themfrom bigger plastic bottles? No, that can’t be the answer. But it is. Right now, the more environmentally conscious properties are removing all their plastic bottles from guest rooms, meeting rooms, conference venues and restaurants, and replacing with either purchased glass bottled water, already full from the manufacturer or empty glass bottles filled onsite from ‘galon’ as they are called here. Neither fully solve the problem, because the problem is far more complicated than just plastic bottles on a table or in a mini bar!

rigorously pursued separation, cleaning and recycling, the impact of plastic bottles from their guests’ usage would be mitigated, as long as the recycling company can do “end of journey” reporting honestly and accurately. Always a challenge, but absolutely necessary.

So, what are the problems, the challenges and the difficulties involved in reducing plastic waste from hotel drinking systems? Well first in our opinion, is the simple fact that there is no government collection and recycling system in place for the plastic bottles themselves. The standard 300 or 500ml bottle can be stripped of its label, separated from its cap and band and very well recycled. This would mean that, as long as all hotels





for a hotel operation is time consuming, prone to potential unhygienic incursions and a major source of hassle (and expense and pollution from transport) and the authorities are not yet providing full segregated collection and recycling services. We are in a position we do not want to be in and seem to have no immediate solutions.

But fortunately, there is one that has just been launched which addresses all the above issues - and one more: **expense!**

Now one thing that is not usually discussed is the *actual* cost of water, which is actually another problem because the core cost of "water" as part of the delivery cost of bottled water is only 10% of the total (see graphic). This leaves enough room for the process which has just been launched, to be developed, paid for and become profitable within 18 months at maximum.

What we are talking about is a fully integrated purification and bottling plant located directly on the hotel premises which uses relatively clean but not potable water from the city water service at a fraction of the cost of bottled water, purifies it to standards above commercial bottled water, bottles it, ready to deliver to rooms and venues, then cleans, sanitises and refills the bottles all on site.

This process has just been installed and commissioned at **Mercure Convention Centre**, Ancol, Jakarta by **PT PIPA** using a Bluewater Swedish purification



system and a fully tailor-made bottling plant which is semi-automatic greatly reducing labour time.

This system ticks **all** the boxes: no plastic on-site at all - so no plastic waste, the glass bottles are reused so often they break through their energy break-even barrier, there are no deliveries, so no transport, no pollution, no carbon footprint, and astonishingly, it will pay for itself in 15 months meaning that hotel owners should willingly pay for its installation. If one 200 room hotel can save 40,000 bottles in a month that means across Indonesia we can save the land-fill dumps (and the rivers and the

oceans) from at least 100 million bottles a month, that's an astounding 1.2 billion a year. And save everybody money in the long run too. Is this the breakthrough we have been looking for?

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