

Opened in 2000, The Westin Resort & Spa is a residentially-designed all-suite resort conference hotel and spa. Located in the environmentally-sensitive destination of Whistler, The Westin felt it was important to develop “green programmes” that would ensure its contribution to the community and make a positive impact on the environment locally, as well as globally. The Westin began working with The CarbonNeutral Company in September 2007.

Objectives

- Engage with customers and staff to reduce energy and water consumption
- Minimise and eliminate greenhouse gas emissions while going beyond environmental compliance issues
- Initiate a carbon offsetting programme that is funded through the cost savings resulting from reduced energy consumption

Programme developed

- Energysaving: created a “CarbonFootprint Programme”, inviting individual guests to choose whether to have housekeeping service in the guest rooms during their stay. Opting out of the service significantly reduces energy usage.
- Offsetting hotel stays on behalf of the guests: The Westin purchases carbon credits from The CarbonNeutral Company for each night that the guest opts out of housekeeping services
- Staff engagement: promoted internal awareness of climate change and the partnership with The CarbonNeutral Company by creating an active “green champion” team of associates from all departments in the hotel

Communication

- Regular meetings led by the ‘Green champion’ team to update and engage all staff on the progress of the energy saving programme
- Publicising the ongoing development of the programme through stakeholder newsletters and the hotel’s website
- Monthly updates through the environmental pages of the company website, on carbon credit purchases and the projects supported through the programme

Results

- As the first hotel to offer this type of customer engagement programme, the programme has delivered a strong platform for media coverage
- Positive feedback from clients and suppliers
- Created a position from which to attract a more environmental conscious clientele
- Saved over 800 t/CO₂ to date
- Won two key awards in 2008: the AWARE Whistler Environmental Business Award; and Hotel Association of Canada’s Four Green-Key Award

“After many months of investigating and exploring programmes worldwide, the Westin believed the carbon offset programme created by The CarbonNeutral Company would be the ideal partnership as hotel guest, associates and vendors could participate to reduce the carbon footprint associated with their stay at the hotel in a way that delivers substantial and measurable results”.

Bryce Beatty, Director of Operations, The Westin Resort & Spa

