

BEST PRACTICES | SMALL

W always has room for green

BY JANET KORNBLUM

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Michael Pace has worked hard to make the W Hotel as environmentally efficient as possible. But if guests don't think of the W as a green hotel, that's just fine with him.

"We're not trying to be a green hotel," said Pace, general manager of the W Hotel in San Francisco. "We're trying to be a very successful hotel where guests love to come to that has a green conscience. Sustainability has been a personal passion of mine for many years."

Toward that end, the W has taken several measures to make itself sustainable, ranging from measures to recycle 70 percent of total waste produced to plans to put wind turbines on the roof. The hotel saves \$60,000 per year from its recycling and composting programs. Its sustainable practices allows the W to book events with eco-conscious organizations like the Tides Foundation and Global Green, generating more than \$500,000 in revenue over the past two years.

The W offers its guests free use of bikes during their stays so they can cycle around the city. It controls the heating and cooling systems so rooms that are empty don't draw energy. The restaurant serves organic, locally grown food. And it offers zero-waste meetings with recycled pads and organic, wrapper-free candy. The hotel also provides carbon offsetting



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"We are not environmentalists," says W's General Manager Michael Pace.

packages — for \$2 a day per attendee, you can offset the electricity consumed on site, and flights can be neutralized for \$9 to \$18, depending on point of origin.

"We are not environmentalists," said Pace. "We're not experts in sustainability. But what we do have is this common passion for sustainability."

Being green, of course, is a hot trend, said Glenn Hasek, editor of Green Lodging News. "It appeals to travelers today — especially young travelers."

But while some hotels pay lip service to being green as a public relations ploy, the W is the real deal, says Marika Holmgren of Organic Events. Holmgren often uses the W for the eco-conscious events she organizes.

"There is a lot of substance there," Holmgren said. "There's a lot of willingness to not just do the bare minimum, but to actually exceed the bare minimum. Places like the W are clearly going to be doing this even when it's not trendy because it's a core value for them."

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WINNER

W HOTEL

W SAN FRANCISCO

Location: San Francisco.

Revenue: \$40 million.

General manager: Michael Pace.

Opened: 1999.

Employees: 280.

What it does: W is a 410-room luxury hotel and XYZ restaurant.