



Whitepaper

Outsource **linen management**, or rather not?

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Blycolin

1. Who does the laundry?

You want to give your guests a “wow” experience. Pamper them with your own unique atmosphere and high quality. Every night should be a dream night, every dinner a meal fit for a king. With the best sheets on the beds, the softest towels in the bathroom and the whitest linen on the tables.

The success of your hotel, restaurant or wellness center depends on the appreciation and experience of your guests. They should feel comfortable to be themselves and feel at home.

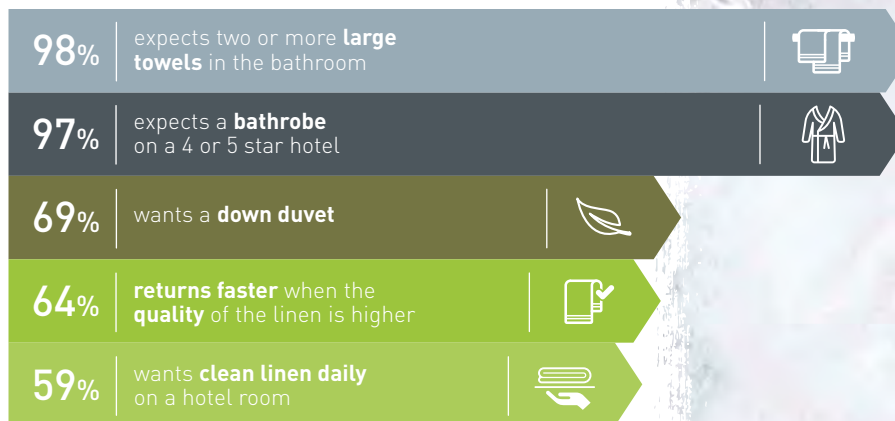
And you would like them to share their great experience with friends, on birthday parties and on social media. Whichever style you choose, the experience of your guests depends on a careful selection and maintenance of your linen.

Moreover, hotel linen is often a precious possession. In a large hotel with 150 rooms, the value of the circulating linen can be as much as € 50,000, but also in a wellness center considerable sums of money are required for the purchase, washing and replacement of soft towels and bathrobes.

Linen therefore holds two important success factors for all hospitality entrepreneurs.

Making an unforgettable impression on your guests on the one hand and efficiently dealing with a considerable and inevitable investment on the other. The key to both success factors is good care for the linen and perfectly attuned logistics, so you can keep giving your guests an impressionable experience.

This is what your guests expect*



* Results of research among hotel guests: Eindhoven, the Netherlands, November 13, 2007, by M.A.H. Dirks



2. Linen management: It is all about balancing care and logistics

Every day ends with containers filled with used linen. You want their contents to be back in the linen room, wrinkle-free, spotlessly clean and undamaged, within a week. The entire process of your linen – from taking it off of the beds to making the beds again – involves much more than ‘just doing the laundry’. It is a major logistic challenge, that recurs daily for your employees.

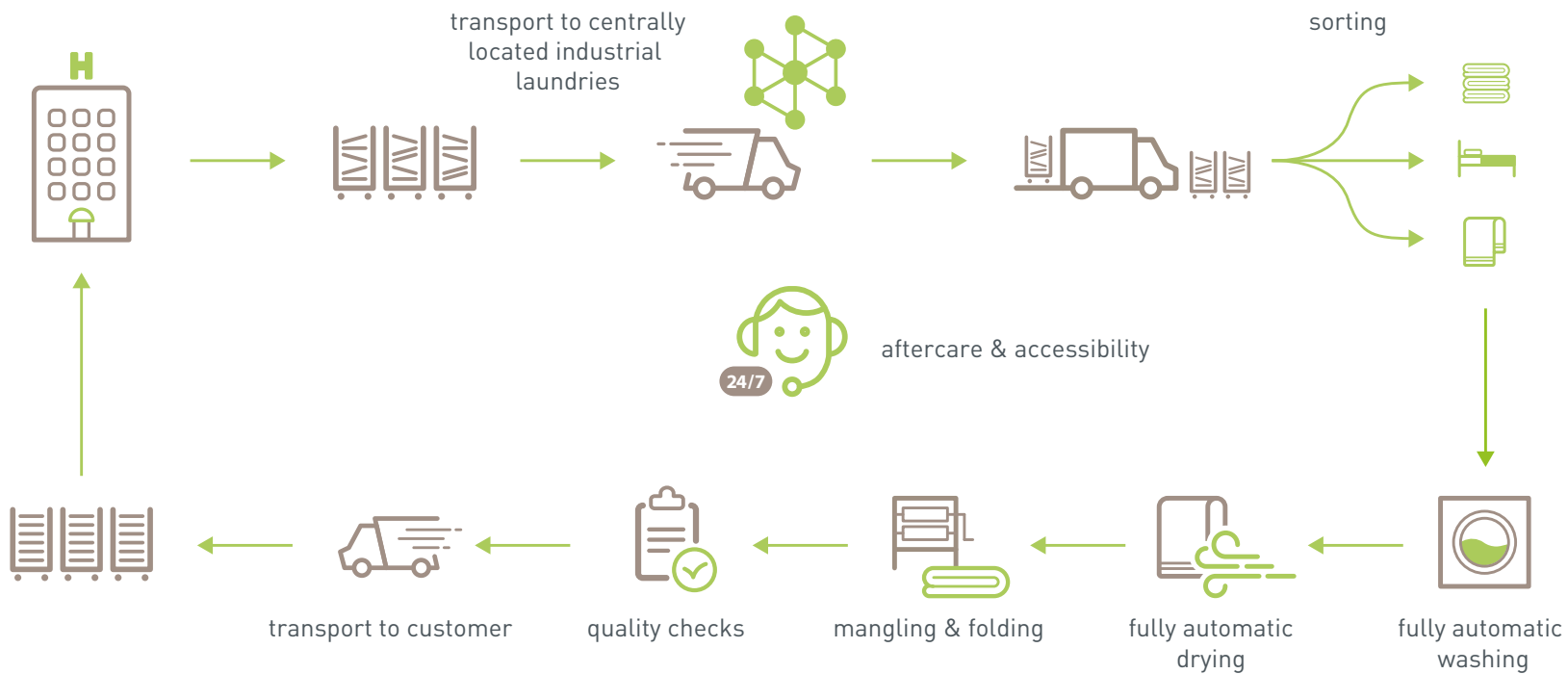
The appearance of your linen is crucial to the experience in your hospitality environment. You pay attention to it when you purchase the linen, but it is equally important that it remains looking beautiful. In three or five years from now, how will the linen look? How many times can it be washed? Are the materials you can choose from tested for durability? Can you restock your towels and table cloths after three years with the exact same high quality? And after five years?

Sustainable linen management and perfectly contrived logistics make your work easier and faster, prevent empty shelves in the linen room and ultimately will save you time and money.



3. Make up my room: A sneak peek behind the scenes and the process

To always have the linen in the right place, maintaining that quality look, involves a very specific process. How will the linen, collected by Housekeeping, come back to your linen room clean and on time?



4. Linen management: what are the options?

If you handle linen management smartly, you attune your process to your location. This has three benefits: you provide your guests with the experience for which they have come to you, you keep the costs manageable and you make the process easier for yourself. Generally speaking, you have the following three options.



Do it yourself

You can, of course, arrange everything on your own. Purchase your own linen and furnish a space for the laundry with a proper washing machine and a wringer. Not just the color, a neat result and a perfect feel are important. Also do a little research on how often the bed sheets and towels can be washed, how many (extra) sets are optimal for the numbers of rooms and guests you have and what the washing instructions are of the various materials.



Outsourcing

You bring your linen to a (local) laundry, or have them pick it up. They know laundry, inside and out. They know which treatment is best for your materials and are often equipped to handle large quantities of laundry. You make arrangements about the deliveries and hand over your laundry to the laundry for a fixed price. Please do mind: not all laundries are the same. Choose a specialist and research the quality. It is of no use to you if your newly purchased linen cannot be used anymore after only a few washings.



Linen service

If you don't want any hassle with your laundry, linen service provides an integral solution that takes the entire laundry process out of your hands. From an expert that helps you choose materials (both in appearance and quality) to logistics (as well as stock management) and the guarantee that your linen will always be available. Linen service has a national coverage and offers a choice between various laundries. This way, you can find a laundry that performs best for your organization. Linen service provides expert knowledge for all the steps in the process and is paid for per washed sheet or towel. So, you pay, afterwards in relation to the occupancy of your hotel or restaurant.

Will you be issuing a tender?

Keep an eye on your own wishes and demands: the amount and quality of the linen, storage/linen room, circulation stock, changes per week. Even in the tender phase, determine how you want to design the logistical process or which requirements it should (minimally) comply with. Also think beyond price and quantity. Make demands about trade knowledge and (the quality of) the

laundry process. Ask to make clear arrangements about daily matters. Where will the deliveries be made? What if there's a hole in a napkin? Who tracks the stocks? And who will replace the discarded linen?

Will you be leasing linen so you do not have to make any investments? Then also clarify your requirements about the quality of the material. For instance, ask for certifications or test reports.

5. The 7 golden rules for outsourcing linen management

No time for dragging laundry bags, negotiating with laundries or doing complicated calculations? There are experts that can take your linen off your hands.

Linen management will save you:

- making a hefty investment
- worries about the amount of linen
- dealing with laundry

If you want to outsource the rental and washing of linen, these golden tips will find the perfect linen partner for you.

1. Ask advice, work together on a customized solution

Always sufficient and cleanly washed linen. Sorted, in the right color and in the right place. Also in busy holiday times or when a large group of people shows up unexpectedly. Consider a total solution: a partner that knows the products, costs and possibilities inside and out. Work out the package that completely fills your needs together. With a calculation, so you can keep the costs manageable. For instance, it could be more cost-efficient to turn fixed prices into variable costs. That way, you do not have to pay costs for linen when a room is not occupied.

2. Take good care of linen and keep white white

You carefully choose your linen and style. The materials are of a radiant quality. And you want to keep it that way, also in the long run. A large set of white towels turning 50 shades of greyer within 50 washings are of no use to you.

That is why the material should be able to withstand the intensive industrial washing process of automated washing, mangling and pressing. Check whether your supplier provides a warrantee for quality.



3. Do not take any (investment) risks

It does not really matter whether you have a small scale guest house in the country or a hotel chain with branches across Europe. New linen is always a hefty investment and bears a considerable risk. Leasing linen is usually more cost-efficient. Also consider the guarantees for replacement of the material. Next year, or in three years or even in five years, you will want to replenish your stocks with the exact same quality towels.

4. Pay attention to the fine print!

Every party wants to help you find the best price/quality ratio. But what do they really deliver? Find out what the word 'total' entails in the quotation of your supplier's total solution. Do they deliver up to the front door, or do they bring the linen into your linen cupboards? Are you obligated to purchase the linen after a certain period of time, or if you want to switch suppliers? Will you be paying administrative or additional transportation costs? Fine print in a quotation can make all the difference, especially in linen. Remain critical and discuss every detail!

5. Move with the times, streamline processes and innovate

Top logistics is a key word these days. Look for internal and external efficiency. Have someone look at how you can decrease the number of actions with regard to linen. For instance, making sure you do not have to handle the linen unnecessarily, that soiled bed and bath linen is already sorted in the room and learning how a linen cart is optimally loaded. This way, you can save time and money by working faster and easier.

6. Do not waste! Think green, be green

Nowadays, sustainability is becoming a platitude. Of course, you work green, ecological and responsible. Guests may not see the difference, but will certainly appreciate the gesture of devoting yourself to a better future for our planet. Choose a partner that can demonstrate how sustainability is incorporated in their process. From logistics, the washing process to the chosen material and even the labor conditions in the manufacturer's factories. This can all be done sustainably, and that way you can contribute. Did you know that industrial washing is up to three times more sustainable than washing at home?



7. Be critical:

which party is really up for the job?

In your search for a partner for the long term, being critical is paramount: are they up for your challenge? Check references and research the company's investment possibilities. You will need a partner that can offer your security and continuity. Are they capable to guarantee long-term replenishment of your linen stock? And will that be delivered on time, or is the speed of deliveries dependent of the cashflow challenges of your partner? And what happens in case of an emergency? Does your partner have any back-up, can they divert your laundry to other laundries? Finally, also look for information on their performance. For instance, have a few test washings performed to see what they can do or visit a production location or laundry for a glimpse behind the scenes.



About Blycolin

Originally, Blycolin's core activity was renting out hospitality linen for bed, bath, table and kitchen for the hospitality branch. And that is still the vibrant heart of our organization. But over the last 40 years, we have developed new products and services that brought us from linen rental to linen service. A total solution with which we take linen management out of your hands 100%. Or, if needs be, just parts of the process.

We feel partly responsible for the operational success of over 2,500 (care) hotels, restaurants, holiday parks and wellness centers across Europe. With our materials, we contribute to the experience and with our linen service, we contribute to an efficient organization. We check the quality of the materials, maintain your stock and make sure your people never face any unpleasant surprises.

Our experts will advise you personally. From styling advice when choosing materials to coaching your employees in the work process. We use all of our knowledge and experience to make you successful. Because your success is a little bit our own success.

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