

8 Ways to Promote Your Hotel's Eco-Initiatives

Chris Syvertsen, General Manager of Mosaic House – the first hotel in the Czech Republic to use 100% renewable electricity and 100% biogas – discussed with us the best ways to promote a hotel's eco-initiatives and exceptional service. Planning an eco-overhaul of your own? Focus on these eight strategies:



1. Skeptics are (rightfully) wary of properties that appear to be “greenwashing.” Stick to specific, meaningful improvements. Guests can tell the difference.

Chris: For Mosaic House, it's relatively easy to promote our property authentically. The eco-initiatives we have incorporated are industry-leading and complex, making it easy to distinguish our efforts from those who have merely “greenwashed.”

We have a sophisticated water recycling system with heat recuperation, which is only the second of its kind in the world. This system recycles all the waste (or grey) water from showers and sinks using an eco-friendly bacterial filtration process, and then sends the recycled water to all of the toilets in the building.

The water savings is tremendous. The system simultaneously recaptures the heat energy from the warm waste water, and then uses it to pre-warm the fresh water used for showering. The heating of the fresh shower water is also aided by the solar panels on the roof of Mosaic House.

2. Strive to become the best property in your niche.

Chris: We are the only hotel in the Czech Republic to utilize 100% renewable-source electricity and 100% biogas, making our energy consumption 100% sustainable.

Further, we have a sophisticated climate management system which continuously monitors and adjusts the temperature in every room, based on numerous variables, in an effort to minimize energy use.

3. Don't think you need to be "traditional" to appeal to a wide variety of guests.

Chris: We've never been the 'traditional' type. Between us, we find it a little boring. Mosaic House was dreamed to be as a unique environment in which all kinds of people from all different places, cultures, and backgrounds (a 'mosaic' of guests, if you will) could come together and share their stories and experiences.

Through offering affordable, design-conscious private and shared room accommodation, we've learned it is possible to appeal to a wide variety of guests.

It's important to point out, however, that it's a challenging concept to make work successfully. We work hard to create an environment which ensures all of our guest's experiences are completely satisfactory.



4. Improve your online feedback and reputation by exceeding expectations.

Katie: So far, Mosaic House has earned 97% positive TripAdvisor feedback; it looks like you're changing a lot of online reviewers' preconceptions about hostels.

Chris: Our goal was to incorporate the positive elements of what defines a 'traditional hostel', namely a relaxed, friendly, and fun environment, while stripping out the stereotypical negative elements (i.e. stale design and cornflake breakfasts) and blending with four-star,

environmentally-friendly offerings.

Based on guest feedback, so far the concept seems to be working. For example, in one recent TripAdvisor review, a guest mentioned 'being pleasantly surprised at the quality of the accommodation and at the ambience'. Another guest review describes Mosaic House as having 'a modern-yet-classic vibe that's both hip and relaxed'.

In addition to the atmosphere and design, guests also comment positively on our service, international staff, green features, cleanliness, and breadth of offerings (such as the gourmet breakfast, Prague customized maps provided upon check-in, and daily entertainment at our own Belushi's Bar & Restaurant).

5. Set the stage for storytelling and engage locals with in-house entertainment and social spaces.

Katie: You mentioned that Mosaic House likes to create experiences that inspire guests and staff to spread news and stories; could you share a couple of examples of these stories?

Chris: Yes, we like stories... and providing a stage (figuratively and literally) for their creation. Not only was the space - which is 100% smoke-free - designed to bring guests together, but we also pay focus to our in-house entertainment. Karaoke nights, themed parties (such as Australia Day and St Patrick's Day), as well as live music on our theatre stage and sports on the big screen, are on for guests (as well as Prague locals) almost any night of the week.



6. Tell stories with photos.

Chris: Take a gander at Mosaic House's Facebook page to catch a 'storybook' glimpse of what's ensued over the past year, including our Green Gala event early last month; we were celebrating the announcement of our newest green announcements: utilizing 100% green electricity, gas, and our

new fully electric car.

7. Think long-term. It'll take years of research and adaptation to fine-tune your ecological efforts.

Katie: Which of Mosaic's features make the biggest environmental impact? Which do your guests most appreciate?

Chris: We've taken a big step, but we're certainly not experts. While we do have projections as to the benefits, it will take years before we are able to truly realize the impact of our eco-initiatives. We're reluctant to offer advice at this stage, except to recommend performing as much research and analysis as is feasible.

In general, guests really appreciate the overall initiative. They admire that we've taken such bold steps towards sustainability and actively work towards minimizing our impact on the environment.

They also appreciate the tangible concepts. For example, our electric car, which is plugged into the side of Mosaic House. The low-flow raindance showers are beloved, perhaps as they also have a bit of a luxurious feature.

8. Find creative ways to measure guest satisfaction for specific initiatives.

Chris: We've actually just begun a program which will help us measure guests' true appreciation. Because the additional cost of using 100% green electricity and gas is fairly significant (roughly an additional 40,000 Euros annually), we are asking guests to consider donating their 2 Euro key deposit towards helping Mosaic House to continue to afford green energy.

Through measuring how much guests donate, we will get a more accurate picture of how willing people are to actively participate in our effort to make a difference. You might consider checking back with us in six months to see how well the program has performed.

By Katie Clapp

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