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8 rules for hotel bedding to improve ROI

Hotel bedding trends change quickly—remember when bedspreads and ruffled skirts were popular? If you want your hotel to be in the moment, don't forget these rules.

1. Incorporate the hotel's branding elements into the bedding. This can be a color—like Langham's signature pink—or a logo. A decorative pillow in the middle of the bed can have a hotel's logo, for example. New technology is allowing bedding suppliers to incorporate branding into the bedding itself. Sferra, for example, can take a custom pattern and create a unique jacquard or matelassé weave. In New York City, the Surrey hotel has a customized jacquard from Sferra on its duvet covers, and the James Royal Palm hotel in Miami Beach, FL, has designs on the bedding that look like water when viewed from a certain angle.



2. Make sure your sheets are designed for hotels. This may seem basic, but bedding designed for home use won't last long in a commercial laundry.

3. Choose linens that have the same border at the top and bottom of the sheets. This will let you rotate them for each use, and prolong the overall life of the product.

4. Make sure your laundry facility doesn't use harsh chemicals when washing your sheets. Be especially careful that they don't use any product with chlorine. "Most companies don't, but sometimes they will," said Jon Bryant, sales director of hospitality at Sferra. "Be sure your laundry uses a good formula."

5. Keep enough linens in stock. Ideally, have three sets on hand for every bed. While one is in use, one can be in the laundry and one can be in storage. This reduces the number of times a sheet needs to be washed, Bryant said, which prolongs its life.

6. Don't fall for the "thread count" trick. "1,000- or 1,200-thread counts are twisted yarns and multiple-pick insertions," said Chris Gowdy, VP of Liddell. "It needs to be a basic single-pick construction for a balanced weave." A single-pick sheet usually has a tighter weave and is softer—making it a win-win in terms of guest satisfaction and return on investment.

7. Pay attention to the quality of the fabric yarns. Superfine yarns may look nice and have an attractive sheen, but they won't work well in a commercial washing machine and iron.

8. Find small ways to bring pops of color into the bedding. "Festoon lines are good to bring color into rooms," Gowdy said. "This is done on duvet covers, pillowcases and shams."

How hotels can reduce laundry costs and preserve linens

Modern laundry equipment has never been more energy efficient, sustainable and conducive to maintaining and extending the life of linens, but it's all for nothing if laundry operators are overloading machines with too many sheets. That's why a growing number of hotels are choosing to outsource their own laundry operations, but for those that choose to keep these facilities in-house, the timing couldn't be better.

"Overall, the quality of in-house laundry operations has gone up, simply because hotels in general are striving to provide a better level of service," said Seth Willer, national sales manager for laundry equipment provider and 8-year GHA ALLY MEMBER Continental Girbau. "They want to differentiate from others, and the guestroom bed is a great place to do that."

Willer said that hotels choosing to handle their own linens can utilize a number of different back-of-house strategies to shave costs and preserve their linens. For instance, he said if a hotel has an on-property ironing system, operators should consider taking sheets directly from the washer to the ironer, skipping the dryer and cutting out the process entirely.



"The preconception is that you have to run your ironer at a certain speed, say you want to process 10 sheets per minute," Willer said. "If you eliminate the dryer completely you may only be able to process six sheets per minute, but there will be no downtime waiting for linen to dry, and you'll also cut out all those extra utilities."

Joel Hommes, director, business development for laundry company Wash Cycle Laundry, said his company took off after picking up business from a Philadelphia hotel looking to outsource operations as their on-property facilities aged. Hommes said hotels looking to reinvest in new equipment, manned by a single employee, have the ability to handle what three or four employees would have been in charge of 10 years ago. However, he said that older equipment still can be used effectively, and many properties are held back by training missteps.

"I tour on-property laundry facilities often, and I see wash drums white with suds to the point where you can't see the linen in the drum," Hommes said. "You have a lot of situations where workers in other areas of the hotel are tapped to go to the laundry department one day, and they won't know all the nuances. Training and accreditation at the Association for Linen Management goes a long way."



Jamison Conrey, corporate director of engineering and project management at Hospitality Ventures Management Group, said

Fox, Jena Tesse, hotelmanagement.net/design/8-rules-for-hotel-bedding-to-improve-roi, March 1, 2017

too often hotels are simply stuck upgrading or outsourcing, with no single reason why. He attributes the shift to everything from the rising cost of water to reallocation of space, making laundry rooms in hotels an unnecessary luxury.

"Hotels are also buying higher-quality linens, and older equipment is not built for some of the better linens out there," Conrey said. "Maybe they don't have the capital to replace their equipment, since costs can go up to a quarter of a million dollars in some cases. Outsourcing and paying month-to-month is a lot less complicated than coming up with that capital."

Mest, Elliott, hotelmanagement.net/operate/how-hotels-can-reduce-laundry-costs-and-preserve-linens, February 22, 2017

Too Many Dogs: A Simple Solution

A cheap, quick, relatively painless procedure could make a big dent in overpopulation. What's stopping it?

At the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota recently, the barking could be heard even over the constant wind. Inside a small community center, dozens of dogs waited in donated crates. Dog overpopulation has been a problem on the reservation. In years past, population control consisted of rounding up strays and shooting them. Now, visiting veterinarians hold free spay-and-neuter clinics several times a year, surgically sterilizing as many as 70 dogs a day and moving many of them off the reservation for adoption.



Lately, the vets have been using a faster, cheaper method of neutering the male dogs: a quick injection of calcium chloride, a common industrial chemical, into the testicles, which renders them sterile. The dogs get a light sedative, but there's no need for general anesthesia or incisions.

They can be up and running again in minutes. The cost: about \$1 per dog.

Calcium chloride could be a boon to animal shelters in other impoverished areas, many of which lack the funds and the facilities to sterilize dogs surgically. More than 3 million dogs and cats are euthanized in US shelters every year. But few veterinarians and shelter operators even know about calcium chloride. It's been stalled in a regulatory Catch-22 that illustrates how products that don't have much profit potential can languish unused.

Cheap, nonsurgical sterilization would also be a godsend to countries like India, where packs of dogs run wild. Worldwide, an estimated 375 million stray dogs are terrorizing neighborhoods, fighting over food and reproducing exponentially.

Research on calcium chloride goes back to the 1970s, when it was tested as a sterilizing agent in calves, colts and other animals. In the past decade, researchers in India published a dozen studies using it in dogs, cats and goats.

In three studies researchers in Bari, Italy, tested a variety of doses and solutions in 80 dogs over one year and concluded that a 20% solution of calcium chloride in ethyl alcohol was optimal, rendering dogs "azoospermic" (without sperm) and reducing testosterone levels by 70%, with no adverse effects. Calcium chloride isn't approved by the Food and Drug Administration and probably will never be. It's such a common

chemical that it can't be patented. As a result, drug companies aren't interested in investing the \$10 million or more needed to run the required clinical trials. Without FDA approval, most veterinary and animal-welfare groups are leery of endorsing it.

Finding safe, nonsurgical ways to control animal reproduction has been a goal of animal researchers for decades, but progress has been slow. Some stakeholders want contraceptive approaches that will drive business to veterinarians' offices; some want methods that can be provided for pennies in the field. Some animal-rights activists insist that street dogs and strays shouldn't have a lower standard of care than house pets. Some oppose doing research of any kind on animals—even to advance animal medicine. "The politics are more complicated than the chemistry," says Elaine Lissner, director of the Parsemus Foundation, a nonprofit that works to advance neglected medical research.

Ms. Lissner tried to start the FDA approval process for the use of calcium chloride in male cats last year, but her bid for a "barrier to innovation" waiver of the \$87,000 application fee was denied on the grounds that the research wasn't innovative enough. The nonprofit Alliance for Contraception in Cats and Dogs considers calcium chloride experimental and calls for more research. "Some vets are horrified at the idea," says the group's president, Joyce Briggs. Because the ingredients are readily available, she says, "there's concern that crazy cat ladies will be mixing this up on their kitchen table and saying, 'Here, kitty, kitty, kitty.'" Instead, the alliance is supporting a rival, FDA-approved sterilant called Zeuterin, which works much the same way. It's available for about \$20 a dose to nonprofits, but it doesn't cut testosterone as significantly, which some shelters see as important to reduce aggression.

A few US vets and shelters are quietly starting to use calcium chloride. Rose Wilson, who supervises an animal shelter in Lawton, OK, has been using the drug since last spring, with the blessing of city officials. She says that she wouldn't go back to surgeries. "We haven't seen any problems with it," she says. "It's simple, it's inexpensive, and it's painless. This is the best thing that's happened in the spay/neuter world in a long, long time."

Beck, Melinda, *The Wall Street Journal*, Too Many Dogs: A Simple Solution, November 28, 2014

Man saves scraps for decades to raise \$400K for children's home

Johnny Jennings is 86 years old, but he first visited the Georgia Baptist Children's Home when he was 18, and the visit changed his life forever. A child ran up to Jennings begging to be adopted, and it was in the moment Jennings realized his life's mission. "When we went to leave, these three little boys grabbed me by the knees and said, 'Will you be my daddy?' And I said, 'I'll do what I can. That took my heart, right there.'" From that day forward, Jennings did everything he could to help, and that turned out to be quite a lot. Since he wasn't ready to adopt a child, he decided to contribute financially. Since he wasn't independently wealthy, he did so by collecting paper and aluminum products and cashing them in for money. That may not sound like it would amount to much, but Jennings has donated more than \$400,000 over the past 30 years. That's a lot of paper products, folks.

Over those 30 years Jennings has become a cornerstone of the children home's community. "Johnny Jennings is one of the most gracious individuals I have ever met," Georgia Baptist

Children's Home President Dr. Kenneth Thompson said. "I have always admired his quiet, humble spirit, his commitment to helping others and most of all, his love for the children in our care."

But how does he get all that paper? Now that people know about his efforts, the paper pretty much comes to him. People drop it off at his house after collecting it through churches,



organizations or in their own lives. Jennings also collected pennies, and as they say: A penny saved is a penny earned. Well, he's saved 24 miles worth of pennies . . . seriously. "84,480 is a mile of pennies," Jennings said. "We finished 24 miles. We had most people from church collecting pennies." Each

and every mile was a donation to the church. One of Jennings' favorite events is the church's annual meeting, which is when he presents his check each year. During this time, the kids who live in the children's home are also in attendance and he loves the opportunity to spend time with them. Jennings has served on the board for four five-year terms. "I've been a trustee for 20 years," Jennings said. "I'm just part of the family." And what a special family it is, thanks in large part to Mr. Johnny.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/good-news/man-saves-scrap-400k-for-childrens-home/ar-AAAnLkZW>

Easy Ways to Repurpose Baking Soda

Using baking soda for more than baking doesn't make you an economist, but it does make you financially savvy. A simple, one-pound box costs as little as 54 cents. But from caramelizing onions quickly to cleaning corrosion from battery terminals to stripping paint, the uses of baking soda border on the conceivably infinite. See how baking soda's uses make it a thrifty solution to many common household problems.

1. Up Your Hummus Game: Homemade hummus made with dried chickpeas never seems to reach the smoothness and consistency of store-bought hummus. Between the limitations of domestic kitchen equipment and overall lack of commercial processing, homemade hummus tends to have a grainy texture—unless you include baking soda in the cooking process.



Baking soda increases the pH of the cooking liquid, helping break down the fiber in the beans, according to food and drink website SeriousEats.com. To make silky-smooth hummus, soak the chickpeas overnight in one teaspoon of baking soda mixed with six cups of water or stock. Next, simmer the chickpeas with one teaspoon of baking soda for every six cups of cooking liquid, peel off the skins and blend the hummus according to your favorite recipe.

2. Give Your Shrimp Some Snap: Few gustatory sensations can compete with the satisfying snap of biting into well-prepared shrimp. Whether poached, grilled or sautéed, shrimp's texture can make or break the enjoyment of a dish. Adding baking soda can help ensure you'll achieve the perfect texture, according to Serious Eats.

To add some snapification to your crustacean, mix a dry brine of one teaspoon of kosher salt with one-fourth teaspoon of baking soda per pound of uncooked shrimp. Toss the shrimp

with the soda and salt, and chill them in the refrigerator for 15 minutes to one hour before cooking.



3. Caramelize Onions Quickly:

Caramelized onions—sumptuously sweet, righteously rich and with a flavor so gloriously complex nothing short of a Byronesque sonnet could justify them with words. But they take a while to caramelize—as long as 40 minutes if you follow Julia Child's iconic soupe à l'oignon recipe from "Mastering the Art of French Cooking." Fortunately, baking soda can reduce onion caramelization time to around 10 minutes.

Baking soda's alkalinity speeds up the Maillard reaction during cooking, the chemical process that gives caramelized foods their distinctive taste and aroma, according to Serious Eats. After adding the onions to the pan, sprinkle one-fourth teaspoon of baking soda per pound of onions over them and sauté until golden brown, stirring occasionally.

4. Balance Canned Tomatoes' Acidity: Unless you can get locally grown tomatoes within a couple days of harvest, canned plum tomatoes, particularly the San Marzano variety, can be an excellent substitute. However, the acidic consistency of canned plum tomatoes varies from brand to brand—and sometimes from can to can, depending on the producer—which inevitably leads to acidic inconsistency in the dishes you prepare.

Adding one-fourth teaspoon of baking soda to a tomato-based preparation at the end of cooking effectively tempers excess acidity and alleviates bitterness. This leads to a smooth, uniform taste throughout the dish, according to American Public Radio's show "The Splendid Table."

5. Reinvent Ramen—With Angel Hair: Japanese ramen has been known to elicit from foodies a reverence typically reserved for deities, demigods and da Vinci. Springy with snap, yet tender and absorbent, true ramen-ya noodles—not the 99-cent block-o-ramen you find at convenience stores—have a texture incomparable to spaghetti noodles. That is, unless you supplement those spaghetti noodles with baking soda.

Kansui, the ingredient that gives ramen its yellowish tinge and satisfying mouthfeel, has alkaline elements similar to that of baking soda, according to Serious Eats. To make your own ramen noodles at home, add two to three teaspoons of baking soda per quart of boiling water, stir in angel hair pasta and cook for four minutes after the water returns to a boil.

6. Make Baking Powder From Scratch: Baking powder creates the carbon-dioxide bubbles that make quickbreads, such as muffins and cakes, rise. Baking powder produces CO₂ much faster than yeast, hence the general term "quickbread" for any baked good that calls for it.

Baking powder comprises nothing more than an acid, an alkali and filler with desiccant properties, such as corn or rice flour, according to BBCGoodFood.com. The alkali, as you've likely guessed, is good ole' baking soda. To make one teaspoon of baking powder, combine one-half teaspoon of baking soda and one-half teaspoon of cream of tartar—you don't need a filler if you use the baking powder immediately. To take your baking alchemy a step further and make self-rising flour, mix one teaspoon of homemade baking powder with one cup of all-purpose flour.

7. Strip Carbonized Food From Grill Grates: Regular grill

maintenance and cleaning with a grill brush helps keep your grilled food tasting clean, pleasantly charred and smoky—not burned, which results from cooking on grates laden with built-up carbonized foods. An effective scraping and brushing after each use should cover you through grilling season, but once or twice a year, depending on the frequency of use, you need to deep-clean the grates.

You'll find several chemical-based cleaners on the commercial market — some with a skin-burning pH of 13.5 and over, and comprised of compounds like caustic potash—that can strip your stuck-on grill grime in as little as 15 minutes. But unless you're cleaning grills in a high-volume restaurant, you don't need that type of chemical firepower.

Instead, mix two cups of distilled vinegar with one cup of baking soda in a heavy-duty garbage bag. Place the grates in the bag, seal it and let them soak overnight—a light scrubbing and rinse the next day will rid the grates of residue, according to grill manufacturer Char-Broil.

8. Remove Tarnish From Copper Pots: You might think high-end restaurants use chemical-based cleaners, such as those that contain oxalic acid, to keep their copper pots and pans gleaming and tarnish-free. Not so. One of the "busy" jobs entry-level kitchen staffers are taxed with is cleaning the copper with—you guessed it—baking soda, along with vinegar and kosher salt.

Using baking soda, vinegar and kosher salt keeps the kitchen free of odors that can waft into the dining area like a miasma of noxiousness, and it makes a heck of a great way to introduce a young cook to the rigors of the professional kitchen. To clean copper pots, mix equal parts vinegar or lemon juice, salt and baking soda. Using a soft cloth, scrub the copper with the paste and rinse, according to MotherNatureNetwork.com.

9. Smile Brighter: It's no secret baking soda helps whiten teeth—several toothpastes tout the inclusion of baking soda in their formulas. But how does it work and what precautions should you take? Baking soda acts as a mild abrasive, removing plaque and surface stains to give the appearance of whiter teeth.

Medical experts suggest using baking soda in your brushing regimen no more than a few times a week—daily use can erode your teeth's protective enamel coating. Mix equal parts baking soda and water or toothpaste, and brush your teeth for two minutes.

10. Tidy the Toilet: Toilets collect a host of undesirable compounds besides the obvious germs and bacteria. You'll find calcium, lime and other collected materials under the rim and on the tank's interior, even if you don't live in a hard-water area.



Take a two-pronged approach to cleaning the toilet with baking soda—attack the tank and the bowl. Add one cup of baking soda and one-half gallon of vinegar to

the toilet tank and allow it to sit for one hour; scrub the tank with a nylon brush and flush. Next, mix one cup of vinegar with one cup of baking soda and pour it into the bowl. Scrub the bowl and under the rim using a toilet brush; allow the mixture to sit for one hour, then flush.

11. Decalcify Showerheads and Faucets: Like toilet tanks, showerheads and faucets catch a good bit of calcium and

limescale over time, and respond to the same cleaning compounds—baking soda and vinegar. To clean a showerhead or faucet, mix one-third cup of baking soda and one cup of distilled vinegar in a heavy-duty plastic bag; hold the bag over a sink to catch spillage from the reaction, [blog FrugallySustainable.com](http://blog.FrugallySustainable.com) suggested.

Next, submerge the faucet or showerhead in the mixture and secure the bag using a rubber band or tie wrap. Allow the faucet or showerhead to soak overnight and run hot water through it for one minute before using.



12. Freshen Musty Books: For some folks, the smell of a musty book conjures pleasant memories of school libraries and secondhand bookshops. Other folks associate a musty book with mildew, mold and fungi, and it's the latter group for whom baking soda can clear the air.

To freshen a musty tome, MarthaStewart.com suggests opening it slightly and placing it upright in front of a table fan. Set the fan to low and allow the air to flow through the pages for several minutes to air it out; wipe mold from the pages, if necessary. Next, place the book in an airtight plastic container along with an open box of baking soda. Allow the book and baking soda to sit in the container, unopened, for two to three weeks.

13. Remove Paint From Metal, Wood and Plastic: For a substance that puts the rise in delicate pastries, gently cleanses teeth and helps make the smoothest hummus around, baking soda doesn't seem as if it would have many high-level industrial applications—but it does. When sprayed with compressed air, baking soda strips paint, refinishes wood and removes rust, with none of the pitting and marring that occurs with sandblasting.

Soda blasting is such a gentle process, the Department of the Interior used it to restore the Statue of Liberty's delicate and malleable copper in the 1980s. Portable soda blasters start at \$249, but you can make your own with a compressed-air tank, air wand and vinyl hose.

14. Make a Body-Universal Deodorant: You can cross-utilize baking soda's alkalinity and odor-neutralizing abilities across a number of materials not limited to the inorganic, including breath and body. Perspiration has a pH between 4 and 5.5, and baking soda neutralizes, or, more specifically, increases its pH to alkaline levels, eliminating odor as it does so.

To make a deodorant you can apply to underarms, feet or anywhere stick deodorant doesn't quite cover, sprinkle up to one teaspoon of baking soda into the palm of your hand and add just enough water to form a viscous paste. Rub the paste into the areas you wish to deodorize and you're good to go. To add antiperspirant properties, combine one part baking soda with six parts cornstarch and sprinkle the mixture onto the desired areas, suggested [Mother Nature Network](http://MotherNatureNetwork.com).

15. Soothe Bee Stings: Bee venom consists of several chemicals that perform a host of actions, like sending alerts to other insects, releasing histamine, denaturing proteins and causing pain, depending on the species.

Some of the pain caused by bee venom comes from its acidity, which can be relieved by the alkalinity of baking soda. To ease the itch and swelling of a bee sting, mix just enough baking

soda and water to form a thick paste and apply it to the affected area, according to WebMD.

16. Deodorize Your Gym Shoes: Gym shoes, or, depending on your feet's diaphoretic distinction, any shoes, collect more than just water from perspiration—urea, sodium chloride, ammonia, lactic acid, chloride and fatty acids come along with it, and react with your skin's ever-present surface bacteria to



produce the unavoidable, but less-than-desirable "funk" that signifies stressful workouts or just a stressful life in general.

Again, baking soda's got your back. Liberally sprinkle baking soda in your malodorous moccasins, lace them up, give them an enthusiastic shake and let them sit overnight. For maintenance, pour a couple tablespoons of baking soda each in a pair of socks, tie them off and stuff them in the toe area of your shoes every night, according to Reader's Digest.

17. Neutralize Your Scent: When it comes to deer hunting, deer have the olfactory advantage. With over 297 million scent receptors, about 80 million more than dogs, a vomeronasal organ that acts as a second nose and a significant portion of their brain dedicated to identifying the smell of humans, deer can detect a hunter coming from more than a quarter-mile away—unless he neutralizes his scent, something at which baking soda excels.

Deer hunters can mask their scent by showering with a couple tablespoons of baking soda mixed with unscented liquid soap, according to *Field and Stream*. To mask the scent of clothing, wash the items using an equal amount of baking soda instead of detergent and, after drying, layer them in a tote bag, sprinkling baking soda on each layer. Then, place an open box of baking soda in the tote, zip it up and let it sit overnight.

18. Terminate Terminal Corrosion: Car batteries plus corroded terminals is the equivalent of sitting stranded in Death Valley without a cellphone signal in August during a heat wave where temperatures reach 120° F. on a cool day. You might not find yourself in a situation that extreme, but if your battery has severely corroded terminals, power won't flow to the cables and your car won't start regardless of your locale.

Keep those terminals clean and corrosion-free with a basic baking-soda paste. Disconnect the battery cables, negative cable first. Next, mix two tablespoons each of baking soda and water in a bowl and scrub away the corrosion using a toothbrush. Rinse the terminals with water and dry them before reconnecting, according to auto parts retailer NAPA.

19. Deodorize Your Doggy: You have to love that good ole' dog smell. The classic canine acidity, distinctive mustiness and otic yeastiness let you know man's best friend is near—but even the most dedicated doggie devotees prefer keeping the perfectly normal, but nonetheless unpleasant, dog scent to a minimum. That's where baking soda can help. To give your pup a wet baking-soda bath, bathe her in a mixture of one tablespoon of baking soda and one-and-a-half cups of warm water and rinse. For in-between bath deodorizing, or dry-bathing, simply sprinkle baking soda over her coat, gently rub it in and brush it through.

20. Halt the Halitosis: Mouthwash isn't a substitute for toothpaste, but it does combat halitosis by neutralizing acids that adhere to your teeth and gums. On those nights you

can't brush before bedtime, a quick baking-soda rinse the next morning will freshen your mouth with no lingering mintiness to get in the way of that first cup of Earl Grey, coffee or OJ. Mix one-half teaspoon of baking soda in about one-half cup of water, and swish, swirl and spit, just as you do with regular mouthwash

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/lifestyle/smart-living/easy-ways-to-repurpose-baking-soda/ss-AA4x5h?li=BBnb7Kz#image=21>

Coop, Walmart bring safer materials to the circular economy

Harmful materials present a significant barrier to shifting many products and supply chains to sustainable and circular economy solutions. The typical microwave popcorn package in the market is not recyclable, which creates waste. Even if these packages could be recovered and recycled, they would not be sustainable: A remaining challenge is that the packages contain fluorinated chemicals (PDF) with known human health concerns that not only contaminate food, but would continue to circulate, leading to even more exposure.

The key is a system built not just on the productive use of resources, typical of a circular economy, but one that also uses safer materials. Pure Strategies outlined these strategies for a sustainable and circular economy, which also includes clean energy and fair opportunities in a research report that demonstrates momentum in this area. Notably, companies are ramping up their efforts and investments in sustainable chemicals management.

Coop leads by example

Denmark's top food retailer, Coop, was the first to remove the known human health hazards in microwave popcorn bags. The company shifted from the grease-proofing packaging additives linked to a host of issues from cancer to endocrine disruption to a package comprising only bio-based, cellulose fibers and paper.

Its innovative delivery of a product without added chemicals is inherently safer than the offerings across the market and allows the package to become recyclable. Additionally, the company expects to gain a competitive advantage by tackling this chemical of concern before it is regulated and by meeting growing consumer demands for safer products.



Coop is not alone in proactive chemicals management. Moving to safer products is a leading sustainability strategy, according to companies analyzed in Pure Strategies' report, ranking above efforts such as resource efficiency and renewable energy. Even more promising, the companies surveyed anticipate additional progress, growing from 64% of companies currently with well advanced or leading efforts to 79% in three years. The Danish manufacturer continues to chart an aggressive course. The company made the shift with microwave popcorn packaging in 2015. Prior to that, it was among the first to commit to reduce hazardous chemicals in textile production with Greenpeace in 2013. In 2016, the company established a "dirty dozen" list of chemicals it is working to remove from its own brand products. The effort covers food and apparel as well as personal care products and other categories, for a store-wide approach to safer materials, similar to the initiative Target announced in 2017.

Walmart drives investment

Walmart is the top retailer driving investment in sustainability, according to the survey. When asked about sustainable chemicals management, meeting customer requirements spurred the greatest activity. 70% of those surveyed indicated they already had well advanced or leading level efforts. As a result, the largest retailer has made impressive progress. Walmart reported that 95% of the weight of its high priority chemicals in home and personal care products was removed from Walmart stores in the US between 2014 and 2015.

Companies indicated that they plan to focus their investments on identifying the chemicals in products and supply chains. This is key as it is the first step to developing safer products. Ingredient transparency was a critical element of Walmart's achievement to date, with suppliers required to disclose product ingredients to them and to the public. However, the retailer does not have complete ingredient information as proprietary compositions do not need to be disclosed. This is an active area for improvement, with Unilever's 2017 commitment to disclose fragrance materials to 0.01% by 2018 being a notable step forward. Walmart is the top retailer driving investment



in sustainability. When asked about sustainable chemicals management, meeting customer requirements spurred the greatest activity.

Walmart announced additional goals to stimulate a sustainable and circular economy last fall. The plan includes efforts with its suppliers to reduce Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions by 1 gigaton and to have all of its private brand packaging be recyclable. However, as the microwave popcorn example showed, recyclability isn't the only challenge; material safety also is important.

A report in 2016 found that two-thirds of brand and retailer food cans, which are recyclable, contained bisphenol A (BPA) and carry with them concerns about endocrine disrupting activity. A key challenge with replacing BPA and other chemicals of concern is finding safer alternatives. Sometimes the available options are not safer, or there is not enough data available to support a change. Companies are recognizing this challenge; they noted in the survey that just behind identifying the chemicals in products and supply chains they are ramping up efforts to evaluate chemicals of concern and safer alternatives.

The survey results signal that companies are not only already making progress, but that they are committed to accelerating the shift to safer products. Gone will be the days with microwave popcorn and canned food containing endocrine disrupting chemicals. Within reach will be a future of a sustainable and circular economy with safer products at its core.

Baldwin, Cheryl, greenbiz.com/article/coop-walmart-bring-safer-materials-circular-economy, March 3, 2017

In California, 'Paper or Plastic?' Is Against the Law

Supermarkets can no longer give out shopping bags, though the claimed benefits are dubious.

There's no such thing as a free bag—at least not anymore in California. Voters recently approved, 53% to 47%, a law outright banning single-use, carry-out plastic bags. Grocery and convenience stores can offer paper or reusable bags, but the

law requires them to charge at least 10 cents a pop. While pot is now legal in the Golden State, plastic bags are contraband. Welcome to the liberal dystopia. California's bag ban is a classic marriage of economic protectionism and government paternalism, dressed up in environmental virtue. As with so many other progressive policies, the ban is likely to have unintended consequences.

The statewide bag ban was hatched by politicians in Sacramento, in part as a solution to a problem created by politicians in Sacramento. In 2006, the state Legislature passed a law that required large grocery stores to run recycling programs to collect plastic bags. To obtain grocers' support for the law, the Legislature prohibited cities or counties from imposing fees on plastic bags. San Francisco responded to this prohibition the following year by banning plastic bags entirely. Nearly 150 cities and counties followed suit, though the local rules varied. Sonoma County put a fee on paper bags, requiring grocers to charge a minimum of 10 cents. Nearby Marin County imposed a 5-cent fee.

The justifications for banning plastic bags have also varied. Liberals in San Francisco proclaimed that the city's ban would reduce global warming and America's reliance on foreign oil. Yet only about 3% of plastic bags are produced using oil, according to a 2014 report. Most are made from natural gas, which is now cheap and abundant in the US. Many reusable bags, on the other hand, are derived from oil, and produced in Asia to boot. Research has shown that paper, cloth and reusable bags produce many times more greenhouse-gas emissions over their life cycles. A 2011 study performed for the United Kingdom's Environmental Agency found that a paper bag, compared with a plastic one, was 3.3 times worse in terms of greenhouse gases. The study also found that paper bags resulted in more water and air pollution.

But even if banning plastic bags does nothing to stave off global warming, how about keeping local streets clean? Turns out plastic bags make up a tiny share of litter, less than 1% in most cities, according to a 2013 survey by Environmental Resources Planning. A 2009 litter survey by Keep America Beautiful found that plastic bags make up less than 1% of objects caught in storm drains. And any high-school kid who's volunteered at a beach cleanup can tell you that cigarette butts and glass shards are more prevalent in the sandy dunes and rocky piers than shopping bags.

While plastic bags don't pose a mortal danger to the planet, reusable ones can present a significant public-health risk. A 2012 study by two university academics found that emergency-room admissions in San Francisco from food-borne illnesses surged after the city imposed its ban. Many people, it seems, were reusing their bags without washing them first. If washing seems like no big deal, remember California's drought.

In any case, the patchwork of bag rules grated on grocery stores' profits. A 2012 study by the National Center for Policy Analysis found that Los Angeles County's ban shifted commerce to incorporated cities where plastic bags remained free and legal. In the months after the ban passed, employment dropped by an average of 10.4% at grocery stores in the county's unincorporated areas. Meanwhile, the at-store recycling centers, mandated by the 2006 law, were expensive to operate and produced uncertain benefits, since few customers returned their bags.

That's why the California Grocers Association joined green groups to lobby for the current law banning plastic bags state-

wide. The requirement that stores charge at least 10 cents for alternative bags was meant to keep retailers from undercutting each other by giving them out free. Farmers' markets, naturally, were exempted. Yet the patchwork remains, since cities and counties with existing bag bans were grandfathered in. This suggests that grocers might have had a different goal: boosting their margins, 10 cents at a time, to help offset California's rising minimum wage.

Meanwhile, Democrats declared that the law would help create jobs in California. Most manufacturers of plastic bags are located in other states that have lower energy costs. Banning those bags would increase demand for reusable ones made in California. Crying foul at the de facto trade barrier, the nation's biggest plastic-bag manufacturers launched a referendum to overturn the law. But it failed. California's population is concentrated in coastal areas that already had local bag bans, so it's no surprise that a majority of voters in these counties backed the statewide prohibition. Voters in inland counties strongly opposed the alliance of big business and government, but there simply weren't enough of them to win. The bottom line is that if you're planning to visit California, be sure to pack some extra bags. They've become a rare commodity.

Finley, Allysia, In California, 'Paper or Plastic?' Is Against the Law, *The Wall Street Journal*, January 28-29, 2017

Wily Hotel Thermostats Cause Travelers' Temperatures to Rise

Systems can leave guests pushing buttons in vain: searching for overrides

Rooms don't get hot enough or cold enough. Ventilation shuts off in the middle of the night. The thermostat says 72, but your sweaty brow says 78. It's not your imagination. Hotel thermostats often aren't under your control. Unknowing guests around the world are left to push thermostats up and down in vain. Fixing the problem requires a degree—or six or seven—as well as a bit of a mischievous streak.

I can't tell you how many times I have awakened sweating bullets at 3 a.m. and the A/C was off," says Houston finance and accounting consultant Jay Callahan. Clever, clammy travelers have started resisting, scouring thermostat manuals to uncover secret overrides of the override.

One Tumblr blog, thermostatbypass, collects bypass instructions. Travelers have posted YouTube videos on various thermostat bypass instructions, and have posted YouTube videos on various thermostat models. A Disney hotel discussion board also has thermostat bypass instructions. On some Inncom thermostats, for example, hold down Display, then tap Off, then tap the Up arrow. That puts the unit in VIP mode, giving control back to the occupant.

A spokesman for Inncom's parent company, Honeywell International Inc., says even though the override capability has been made public, "we have not seen widespread use of it by guests." Hotels continue to set bypasses at guests' desired temperature on request, he said.

The humble hotel wall thermostat, once just a mechanical temperature sensor and fan-speed switch, has become an infrared heat and motion detector wirelessly networked into building controls that cut costs by reducing energy consumption. Many are tied to door switches, shutting off when people leave the room or even open a window or balcony door.

Sensors can be fooled by sound sleepers and erroneously shut off air in the middle of the night. Guests wake up and realize a quick wave of the arm will bring back A/C. Hotels acknowledge this happens. They also say lack of cleaning and maintenance can render many hotel thermostats inaccurate by as much as 20%.

Overall, hotels say new systems increase guest comfort and reduce costs. Some can measure and adjust humidity in a room. Limiting how far guests can push thermostats reduces maintenance expenses (sometimes making a room too cold can freeze up air-conditioning condensers.) And new room control systems, which have become much more affordable for hotels, comply with tougher energy-conservation building codes and sometimes qualify for tax rebates.

"When it comes to thermostats, the world has evolved," says Randy Gaines, Hilton's vice president operations and new project development for the Americas. Hilton's goal is for simple, passive control so guests will be comfortable without playing with the thermostat. "We're getting far fewer complaints than we used to years ago," he says.

The New York Hilton has a system that keeps unoccupied rooms at 78 degrees, then automatically sets the thermostat to 74 when a guest checks in. The system cools the room down in about 5 minutes. Companywide, new temperature control systems have helped reduce energy use by 4% since 2009.



Thermostat big brothering is a sensitive subject for some hotel companies. InterContinental Hotels Group, which includes Kimpton, Holiday Inn and other brands, was lukewarm to discussing its energy policy. "This topic isn't a fit right now," a spokeswoman says.

Steve Torbett, a produce manager from Charlotte who has spent 30 years on the road, keeps track of which hotels he stays in that use motion sensors on thermostats and refuses to book them in the future. His worst experience was in Miami where a thermostat shut off air so frequently he woke up five times. "The timer was pretty short and it was just miserable waking up about every hour and having to wave your arms around," he says.

He says he has had to hunt down override codes less frequently because some hotels are getting better at programming the devices. On the flip side, some new thermostats block unauthorized overrides.

Tim Fountain, who spends 150 nights a year in hotels managing sales for a technology company, thinks central limits imposed by hotels make it harder to get rooms to desired temperatures. He carries a travel alarm clock with a thermometer and says 30% of the rooms he has been in have thermostats that misreport room temperature. Worst case: a thermostat that said it was 65 when it was really 72. "It just gets to be silly," he says.

Hotel consultants and owners say that more than half of all

hotel and motel rooms have heating/air-conditioning units mounted on an exterior wall, called Package Terminal Air Conditioning or PTAC. They are notoriously noisy and nick-named wall-bangers in the industry. If the units aren't cleaned monthly and switches and controls well maintained, their temperature sensing can be inaccurate by 12% to 20%, says Greg Posmantur, chief executive of JYI Hospitality Management & Consultants of Cypress, Texas.

"If it's a limited-service hotel, you're often dealing with tight budgets," and units may not get cleaned frequently, he says. Robert Rauch, a hotel owner and consultant from San Diego, says he has thermostat problems himself on the road. He sets thermostats to 55 to find the minimum temperature the hotel allows, usually 68 or 69. "Our hotels allow guests to go down to 65, but lots of hotels are only 68 to 70," says Mr. Rauch, chief executive of RAR Hospitality. His company manages 23 hotels.

Thermostat issues don't rank high in Expedia or TripAdvisor hotel complaints. But some travelers are plenty hot. A reviewer of the Holiday Inn Express & Suites Northeast in Wichita, KS, complained of having to get up and wave at the thermostat. "This is a horrible way to treat a guest." The hotel responded saying the thermostat vendor "assured us that this will not be a problem." But after the complaint, the hotel decided to disable the motion sensors. In an interview, the manager said the hotel hasn't had thermostat complaints since.

Hilton's Mr. Gaines says most often when motion and heat sensors aren't picking up guests, it's a programming problem.

Mr. Callahan, the Houston-based frequent traveler, says he thinks hotels set thermostats in the summer to show temperatures lower than they actually are. He hunts for bypass instructions online. "They're trying to fool you," he says. "Some of these places rig the thing so you cannot get to the temperature you like."

McCartney, Scott, Wily Hotel Thermostats Cause Travelers' Temperatures to Rise, The Wall Street Journal, January 26, 2017

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FINAL WORDS . . .

We need wilderness preserved—as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds—because it was the challenge against which our character as a people was formed.

Wallace Stegner