



Harry Hobbs: Sustainability and the “Triple Bottom Line”

In August of 2007 when Peter Koehler, the general manager of the Hotel, asked me what I thought we should do for recycling and green programs for the new hotel. I told him that LEED was the best way forward. At the time I didn't know how true that was, but I did know that he and I shared a vision of operations for the new hotel that would be socially responsible, ecologically respectful, and financially sound. We are fortunate to be a part of an ownership and operating partnership that is committed to providing a luxuriously responsible hotel experience in downtown San Francisco.

Right now, the story is the struggle of identifying and implementing green operations and maintenance practices. In September of last year, Jubilee Daniels became our LEED consultant. With our newly formed “Green Team” we gathered enough information to decide we could achieve certification or possibly even Silver, for no additional costs, other than our energy improvements. In December of 2008, we did our first credit selection eco-charrette. During this process we reviewed all the available credits with the hotel management team and decided we could achieve Silver certification and maybe even Gold. Each credit we have selected now has an owner and a plan to achieve the credit. When you come to our hotel you will see that our teams speak the language of LEED.

The path to LEED is challenging and exciting. LEED-EBOM is a thorough review of all the ways we do business and has demanded that we foster a learning environment along the way. Sometimes it seems like the only thing we have to change is everything. This has provided us with an opportunity to go back and examine our current operations, change existing practices in order to reduce their environmental impact and save money in the process.

The good news is that everywhere we turn we find willing partners to help us on our path. Our customers expect us to help them offset their travel and to recycle their waste and we do. San Francisco State College has provided hundreds of hours of research through student projects and interns to help determine our direction. Pacific Gas and Electric expects us to be as frugal with energy as possible and give us rebates for energy saving projects and practices such as the Retro-Commissioning components of the LEED project. Across the street from the hotel is the Pacific Energy Center where free seminars and classes are offered. We are also finding help from the Food Service Technology center who have provided a free energy audit of our kitchens. They are the ones who provide Energy Star labels for commercial food equipment. Sunset Scavenger and Golden Gate Debris are the best trash and recycling partners I have ever worked with. Last but not least, is the city of San Francisco with its zero waste goals and all the free advice and even water saving devices. They have provided free low flow faucet aerators for every guest room. In my town there is a lot of help if you ask for it.

If you are like me you probably got into or stayed in this business to make things better. I love to find ways to save energy, make workplaces healthier, and see buildings and plants shine. Some of you may not remember the first Earth Day, but I do. I thought days of true environmental responsibility might never come. This is our moment and our time is now. Ninety percent of the problem today is in our hands to change or ignore. I choose change and with any luck and a lot of help next year the USGBC will certify that we have.



InterContinental San Francisco



Harry Hobbs, CFM
Director of Engineering

Property overview:

- 32 floors above ground
- 2 basement levels
- 550 total guest rooms
- Duplex penthouse Presidential Suite
- 43,000 sq. ft. meeting space:
 - 2 ballrooms
 - 21 meeting rooms
- 3 outdoor terraces
- 5,050 sq. ft. spa
- 1,368 sq. ft. fitness center
- 1,430 sq. ft. indoor pool area
- Award-winning restaurant
- Bar

- 607,221 sq. ft. total gross building area
- 532,765 sq. ft. above ground
- 75,456 sq. ft. for 2 basement levels