

# LODGING

May 2023 <<

“NOW WE’RE IN WHAT I CALL  
‘THE NEXT GOLDEN AGE OF TRAVEL,’  
AND THAT ACCELERATION  
SHOWS NO SIGNS OF SLOWING.”

**CHRIS NASSETTA**

National Chair, USTA;  
President/CEO, Hilton

## Power Chair

HILTON'S NASSETTA LOOKS  
TO LIFT TRAVEL TO NEW HEIGHTS  
AT HELM OF USTA

# Supply Line

ESSENTIAL PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

*Bedding, Linens and Bathroom Amenities*



SOURCE CODE

## Better Bedding

Suppliers respond to the call for greater comfort, safety, and sustainability

by GEORGE SELI

**A**long with bath facilities, the bed is one of the basic reasons for renting a hotel room, and superior bedding that supports a quality night's sleep is increasingly what guests expect across all chain scales. Accordingly, inadequate bedding is one of the three major sources of complaints from guests, along with lack of cleanliness and incompetent problem resolution, observes David Wiles, director, Hospitality Division, Tempur Sealy International, Inc. As a result, hoteliers are making greater investments in bedding products that promote "better, more consistent sleep for their guests," he says.

Just as travelers expect a guestroom digital entertainment experience that matches or exceeds what they enjoy at home, they also look for hotel bedding products that reflect what they are attaining in the retail market. "Con-

sumers today are spending a tremendous amount more on their retail bedding products," Wiles says. "They're getting a higher value of mattress than what they were getting 10 years ago, and they want to go into a hotel and get, at the bare minimum, what they have at home."

The increased investment into bedding is not just seen in the upper chain scales. "The brands are starting to look at that economy segment to make sure that they're also bringing a higher quality of sleep," Wiles says. And it's not just about meeting guest expectations: "What really comes with higher quality sleep is a higher quality product that ultimately allows hoteliers to get a better return on their investment over time," he adds.

Tim Keegan, SVP hospitality, Blue Ridge Hotel Textiles, has also observed the overall industry trend →

toward higher quality bedding products, beyond the mattresses. "Over the past 15 years or so, hotel bedding has evolved dramatically, with hotels trying to put more luxurious products on the beds. That includes the pillows, the blankets, the threadcounts in sheets, pillowcases, and duvet covers," he says, confirming that economy and midscale hotels are also upscaling since higher quality comes at a lower cost today. "Even the lower-end pillows that are available today are a higher quality than what the lower-end pillows were 15 years ago," Keegan notes.

materials," Keegan says. "Hotels focus on the combinations of these product choices that provide specs 'built' for guests and can deliver an improved sleep experience while withstanding rigorous usage and commercial laundering."

Thermoregulation has become one of the most popular features. The "chill technology" featured on certain Tempur Sealy mattresses—essentially a type of gel-infused foam—is an example. "Reducing temperatures within the mattress helps you get into REM sleep because your body actually has to lower its temperature to get into that deep sleep," Wiles explains. "Overheating in

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Director, Hospitality Division, Tempur Sealy International, Inc.

#### A RICH ARRAY OF PRODUCTS

Not only has quality bedding become more economically attainable for hoteliers, but there is also a proliferation of types of products. For example, pillow fills can be synthetic or natural, and there are numerous options within each category—12-15 types of synthetic fills and natural fills of different goose and duck down types, as well as blends thereof, Keegan explains. More mattress varieties are also being developed, an example being Tempur Sealy's inner spring/memory foam hybrid. "It still has an innerspring for the sleeper to be able to move around and allows that memory foam to rebound in a more profound way, which caters to both the people that sleep on products like Tempur-Pedic and those that sleep on an innerspring," Wiles explains. "You're essentially taking those two consumers or products and marrying it into one and getting the benefits of both."

The advantageous features of different products have also proliferated. "Fabric technologies include thermoregulation, allergen protection, scented materials, odor control, and VOC technologies. Similar choices are also available in filling

the mattress will tend to wake you up out of REM sleep. That's why we move so much in our sleep—to ultimately find a cooler place so that our body can go back into REM sleep. And our goal is to keep you in REM sleep as long as possible because that's the restorative part of your sleep."

#### FOAM FEATURES

While there are advanced features that can optimize sleep (e.g., thermoregulation), they often come with a higher price tag. Particularly for economy and midscale properties, hoteliers will want to focus on the features that are most essential to a good night's rest. When it comes to the quality of sleep a mattress can deliver, the criterion is often thought to be coil counts. However, Wiles disagrees with that criterion. "The reality is, our bodies do not articulate 700 coils. We have big movements in our body between our hips, our shoulders, our knees," he says. "And the coils are not what fails on products. What fails is foam layers. So, I would say that no matter if you're looking at an economy product or a premium product, it's the foam package

that is ultimately going to deliver your comfort and durability." Furthermore, the number of foam layers is not the important factor, but rather pre-compressed, gel-infused, and high density. "Those are the three indicators that determine if that foam product is going to fail or not," he advises.

One kind of foam to avoid is corrugated, which has an "egg carton" appearance. "We do not use any of that foam in hospitality because it creates more air in the foam," Wiles explains. The little bumps aren't as supportive as a flat layer of foam going all the way across, because essentially, you're taking half of the material out to create the corrugated foam. Once that starts to compress, you start to see those body impressions very quickly. So, we don't think it's the right product for the investors."

#### PRODUCT CARE

Investing in quality, durable bedding products is only part of the initiative to deliver a quality sleeping experience; caring for those products is the other side of the coin. "The most important thing a hotelier that has a limited budget can do is to invest in the care of the product to extend its life. The last thing you want to do is constantly be replacing product because it's wearing out," says Keegan. "By care, I mean using pillow covers and ensuring laundry procedures are the best they can be."

Fortunately, many suppliers provide support for the hotel operator's maintenance efforts. "We include proper laundering instructions in every carton, sew care instruction labels on every product, our website includes commercial laundering instructions, and we offer product-specific laundering instructions with secure website access to specific hotel brands," says Keegan by way of example.

#### A GREENER OUTLOOK

The "green" movement is going strong in the hotel industry, driven by both the cost savings that oftentimes come with sustainability as well as the expectations of eco-conscious travelers. This year's launch of Sealy Naturals is a sign that this movement is extending to the bedding space. The GreenGuard-certified product is "100 percent made from sustainable resources and all-natural

components," says Wiles. "The foams are latex, not polyurethane, and the fabrics are made from hemp fibers and organic cotton."

Biodegradable materials for other bedding products are also becoming more available and constitute an area of research and development. "One of our core products is down and feather, which is probably the most eco-friendly bedding material in the world," says Keegan. "With 100 percent reuse and biodegradability, down and feather makes great compost or mulch." In addition, Blue Ridge Hotel Textiles conducts research in biodegradable

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Blue Ridge Hotel Textiles

synthetic fabrics. "We have been focusing much of our development on biodegradable technologies that can shorten degradability from 200 years (petrol-based polyesters) to two years (same as wool and other natural fibers)," he says. "Our goal is to have 100 percent reuse/recycle or a natural, quick biodegradable process."

Bedding materials like these allow eco-conscious guests and hoteliers who promote the sustainability of their brand to rest easy.

#### TREND WATCH

## Minimizing Health Risks

**FREEING GUESTROOM BEDS FROM MICROBES, ALLERGENS, AND VOCs**

COVID-19 shined a more intense spotlight on health and safety practices in the hospitality industry, but the focus was certainly in effect pre-pandemic. "Even before COVID, there was an increased interest in cleanliness," observes Tim Keegan, SVP hospitality, Blue Ridge Hotel Textiles. "Hotels invested in additional sanitization and cleanliness protocols that in bedding included better cleaning standards and using antimicrobials and virus-protection materials."

Market offerings reflect that longstanding priority. For example, Tempur Sealy International, Inc. has been using an antimicrobial treatment on its products since 2014, notes David Wiles, director, Hospitality Division. "Up until the pandemic, it was definitely a topic of conversation for us because we knew the benefits that treatment brings in terms of reducing bacterial growth within the product, allowing it to stay fresh for a much longer period of time," he explains. "But as we moved into the pandemic, antimicrobial treatment was a high topic of conversation." Antiviral treatments are a separate and more involved procedure, he adds. "The true benefit of antiviral versus antimicrobial is that you get CDC approval versus EPA approval. CDC approval is a three- to four-year process, rather like approval for a drug. So, the FDA needs to see multiple studies and testing. Oftentimes, suppliers would throw an 'antiviral' claim out, and then they had to pull it back very quickly."

Another health risk is posed by volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which are emitted by oil industry byproducts used to create foams. Fortunately, buyers can look for certifications for low VOC emissions, such as the one conferred by CertiPUR-US. "All of our foams are CertiPUR certified," Wiles says. "Basically, to be considered a certified foam, you have to have a VOC emission for indoor air quality of less than .5 ppm (parts per million)."

Antiallergenic measures are also seeing "a big push in the hospitality industry," Keegan notes. "Bedding is still the primary cause of allergic reactions hotel guests experience, and most of those are attributable to poorly cleaned bedding, or the use of porous fabrics that allow dust, dirt, and allergens, including dust mites and their food sources, to permeate bedding." He adds that natural-fill products, if cleaned and sanitized properly, don't aggravate allergies. "So, hoteliers can get a luxurious product without the fear of putting guests at risk." GS