# Tapping into the Power of Security Technology to Gain the Edge in Hotel Sustainability

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# A New Era in Eco-friendly Business Practices

Sustainability is a top priority for hospitality industry professionals and travelers alike. Widespread coverage of environmental crises around the world has driven a desire to examine the sustainable practices of businesses more closely. When analyzing the preferences of millennials, 70 percent in fact state that they are more likely to stay with a brand featuring a strong environmental reputation and policy. With 65 percent of business travel planners now also prioritizing booking corporate stays at eco-friendly hotels, it's clear that this is an issue that cannot be ignored.

Thanks to ongoing innovation in hotel technology, industry professionals now have access to tools and best practices that can safeguard their reputations and meet the growing eco-friendly demands of their guests. Within the field of hotel security technology, new and promising solutions are leading the way towards business operations that can ensure the wellbeing of both hotel guests and the environment simultaneously.

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# Bringing Operational Sustainability into the Cloud

Until recently, hotel businesses had little choice but to adopt access management systems requiring the presence of on-premise servers. This not only results in higher utility costs but also can significantly increase a property's environmental impact due to increased energy use. At the same time, maintenance and system updates must be performed on property, supported by the required level of technology expertise.

Cloud-based access management systems sidestep these issues entirely by eliminating the need for onsite servers and instead relying on centralized data centers. With an access management system existing entirely offsite, this immediately means a drastic decline in energy consumption for individual properties. If businesses move their various operating systems to the cloud, it's estimated that the energy-savings alone would be sufficient to power Los Angeles for 12 months.

Cloud-based software can even have an impact on the reduction of fossil fuel-based travel. From routine maintenance to software updates ensuring that hotels are protected using the latest in security technology, cloud-based access management systems can be serviced without a technician having to physically travel to a property's location.

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# Leveraging Eco-Friendly Cloud System Integrations



One of the leading reasons behind the hotel industry's shift towards cloud-based technology is the enhanced ease of enabling integrations between various hospitality systems. Yet while much of the focus is on streamlining operations, enhancing security, and providing guests with a superior stay experience, cloud-based systems can also more readily facilitate integrations that further minimize energy use.

For example, a cloud-based access management system is able to seamlessly secure data communication between platforms including a property's PMS or guestroom management system while avoiding the struggles of maintaining legacy systems or protocols that are limited within property's local area network infrastructure. Without involving headaches for managers and with regards to sustainability efforts, integrations performed between access management and guestroom management systems can significantly determine whether a guestroom is either vacant or occupied. What this ultimately means is that hoteliers can automatically lower in-room amenity settings to energy-saving levels the moment guests leave a room, while still ensuring a comfortable environment when they return. With this integration alone, hoteliers can expect to see their energy consumption go down by as much as 15 percent.



**15%**

# The Case for Eco-Friendly Practices Using Digital Keys

Digital key services may have taken the global hotel industry by storm due to the dramatic increase in convenience and faster service experienced by guests, but the technology also stands to play a substantial role in business sustainability efforts. Using these solutions, hoteliers can substantially lessen their reliance on plastic that otherwise leads to 150 million tons of waste produced by the industry each year.

As a fully digitalized cloud service, mobile key technology requires no need for physical access credentials to be created or issued from a front desk or kiosk. The same convenience that lets each guest sidestep front desk check-in by using personal devices as a secure room key also translates into one less plastic keycard being used and ultimately discarded. Since launching its own mobile key service, for example, Hilton Hotels has delivered more than one million digital keys to guests each month. While Hilton also leverages a successful plastic keycard return policy that minimizes waste, the brand's use of digital keys is estimated to have already saved up to 40 tons of plastic.

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# Where Sustainable Physical Keys Fit In

Although mobile key services are enjoying widespread adoption and use, there will remain a sizeable number of guests who prefer the lower tech approach of keycards for the foreseeable future. However, this by no means results in hoteliers having to make concessions on reducing their reliance on single-use plastic.

By partnering with physical access solution providers who recognize and have adapted to the importance of improving sustainability, hospitality industry professionals can gain access to physical key alternatives featuring an eco-friendly design. Materials used to create sustainable keys include:

▶ Wood using sustainably sourced practices
▶ Recycled paper
▶ Metal
▶ Silicone
▶ Satin

When considering their options, particularly when it comes to wood or paper-based keys, hoteliers must ensure that such materials come from sustainable sources. Examples include wooden keycards manufactured from sustainable forests where stewards carefully manage the landscape to prevent damage to ecosystems and wildlife. Taking this approach, businesses can benefit from a biodegradable key credential that features minimal unintended consequences for the environment.

Keys made from these materials can also be customized to fit specific guest or staff use cases. While minimizing the amount of waste created by hotels, such keys can be fashioned into not only cards but also wristbands, fobs, badges and much more- providing hotels and their guests with the convenience of choice while keeping sustainability priorities front and center.
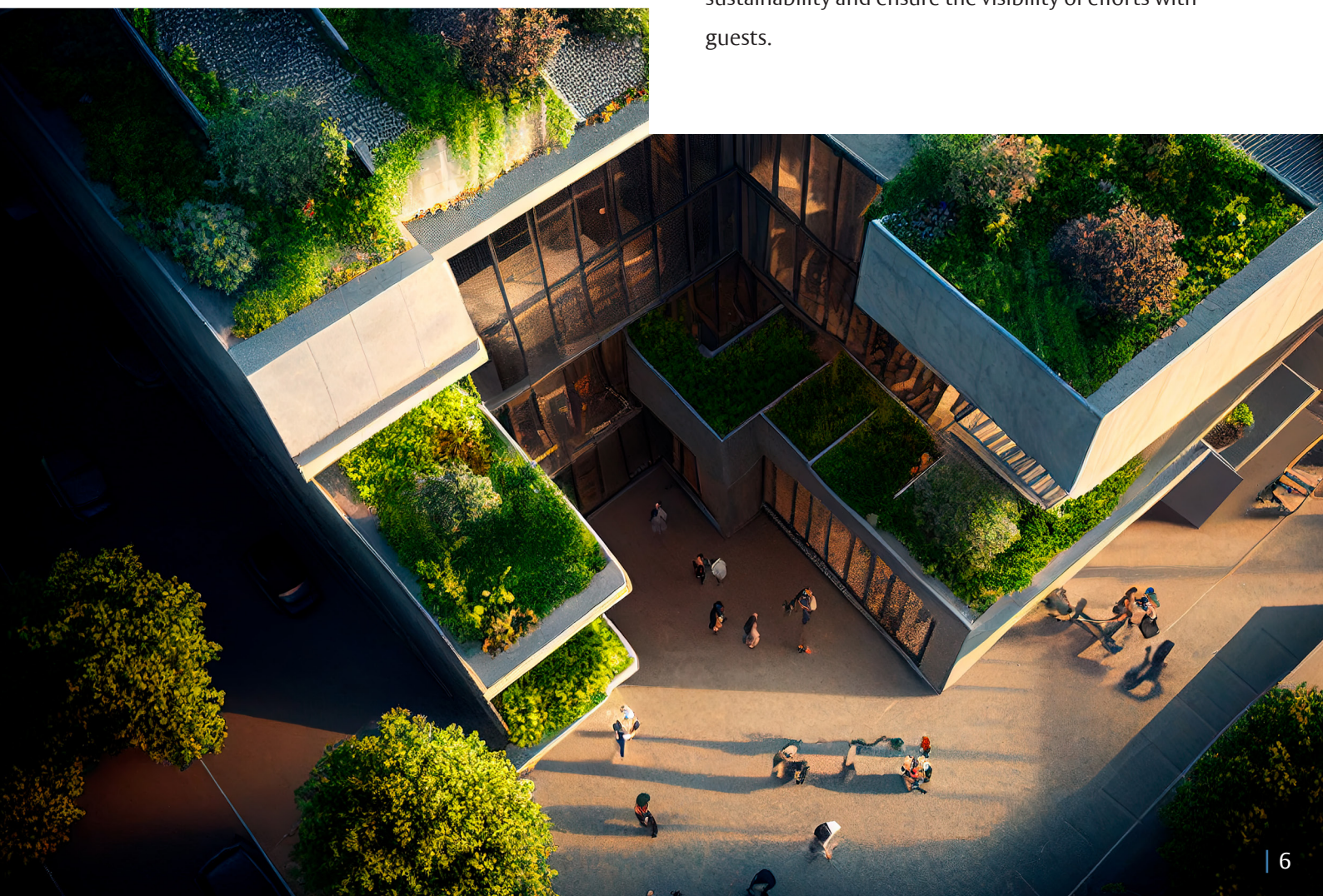
# The Benefits of Selecting Green Certified Solutions

With so many competing solutions available to the hospitality industry, it can be a challenge for hoteliers to determine which represent the best value in terms of sustainability. Fortunately, certification programs such as the Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) can provide industry professionals with invaluable guidance on the impact of specific solutions on the environment. Featuring an intensive analysis rooted in both ISO and ANSI standards, solutions featuring EPD certification can demonstrate how a solution affects sustainability at each stage of the product lifecycle.

With regards to a hotel's physical access management operations, EPD certification can include a property's electronic door locks, in-room safes, programming units, and even the connected hubs or gateways used for the functioning of an online system. With access to such information, hoteliers can readily determine if a solution is manufactured using sustainable practices and materials in addition to knowing what the environmental impact will be when a solution is inevitably discarded and replaced.

With an overwhelming 88 percent of travelers indicating a preference for hotels offering transparency over their sustainability practices, EPD certification can serve as a crucial asset in providing proof of a business' sincere efforts. At the same time, EPD certified solutions can boost a hotel's ability to earn green building certifications such as LEED, Green Globes and

BREEAM. With these, hoteliers gain yet another opportunity to promote their commitment to sustainability and ensure the visibility of efforts with guests.

# Working With a Security Access Provider With an Eye Towards Hotel Sustainability



With the issue of sustainability set to become only more of a priority for the world's travelers, keeping pace with ever-increasing eco-friendly expectations will undoubtedly become even more crucial to running a competitive and successful hotel business. However, hoteliers are by no means left alone to address the issue by themselves. They instead should seek out the guidance of reputable and established solution providers to stay ahead of the latest trends and capabilities. When it comes to property access security, sustainable practices and the ability to align with high industry standards, hoteliers should always pose the following questions to providers to ensure that they have the

abilities and expertise needed to deliver effective results:

▶ Whether solutions offer energy-saving benefits that translate into reduced carbon footprints and lower utility expenses.

▶ If a security access provider offers transparency over the full impact of its solutions on the environment.

▶ If a solution provider offers effective alternatives to single-use plastic keys.

▶ The ability to promote/visualize sustainability initiatives to guests to enhance business reputations.

Ready to give physical hotel security and sustainability the heightened attention both issues deserve? Contact the industry-leading experts at Vingcard and start your journey towards a safer, more environmentally responsible business today:

**Get in touch with us**

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