Hospitality industry in quest for reliable energy amidst green transition

In an era where the hospitality sector is increasingly reliant on energy and data, the industry faces a formidable challenge in maintaining operations while shifting towards more sustainable practices. Hotels, particularly those with casinos, are dependent on round-the-clock data centre support for their guests, conference rooms, restaurants, and public facilities. This dependency makes them critical power sites, necessitating a constant and reliable energy supply.

Thabang Byl, Buildings Segment Lead at Schneider Electric

However, this journey towards a greener footprint presents obstacles, especially in regions plagued by power instability. The traditional reliance on backup generators is no longer viable as a primary solution during frequent load shedding or unexpected power outages.

The stakes are high, as poor power quality and unreliable supply not only risk damaging sophisticated equipment but also carry severe financial consequences. It is imperative for hotels, guest houses, and other hospitality entities to prioritise power quality, reliability, and supply in their quest for sustainable operations.

Jan Fourie takes over as Mulilo Energy CEO in May
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The industry's future may well depend on its ability to navigate these challenges, balancing the demands of modernity with the imperatives of environmental stewardship.

'Consider the entire lifecycle'

"The hospitality industry should consider the entire lifecycle. It's not just about adopting greener practices to differentiate yourself from competitors, but also implementing sound operational practices. This involves protecting your assets and investments comprehensively," explains Thabang Byl, buildings segment lead at Schneider Electric.

"After all, investing in greener technologies makes sense only when you're safeguarding the key assets within your facilities. This requires a comprehensive approach, from going greener to maintaining continuous support for sustainable practices. This not only aligns with environmental considerations but also safeguards operational efficiency and the long-term resilience of your assets.

> *It's a holistic strategy that ensures your commitment to sustainability is well-integrated into every aspect of your business operations.*

Two critical points should be emphasised in the pursuit of sustainability and sound operational practices. First, enhancing power reliability and second, establishing microgrid solutions as enablers for efficient energy consumption.

"It is important that we analyse data structures, expansion plans, and existing backup storage. This insight allows us to identify energy consumption patterns, potential power quality issues while also pinpointing energy-saving opportunities – considering the feasibility of microgrid implementation," Byl says.

Strategic integration

Microgrids, when strategically integrated with efficiency programmes, offer important energy management and supply advantages. By optimising operations through technologies such as building management systems (BMS), hospitality facilities can achieve greater efficiency. Studies suggest that these efficiency measures can lead to significant reductions in consumption, contributing to both environmental and cost-effectiveness goals.

"Utilising a microgrid with a storage component offers the advantage of peak shifting. This means storing energy during off-peak times and using it during periods of high demand, reducing electricity costs. It's a strategic move for electric conservation, effectively managing resources and optimising costs," concludes Byl.

The importance of power reliability, quality, and innovative solutions like microgrids cannot be overstated in the hospitality industry. By embracing data-driven strategies, a lifecycle approach, and optimising microgrid efficiency, hospitality facilities can not only enhance operational resilience but also contribute significantly to environmental sustainability