

Analysis of environmental performance in hotels with and without environmental management systems

Extended Abstract

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Background

Against a background of increasingly serious environmental deterioration and improving environmental regulations, businesses and industries are facing growing responsibility to manage their activities. Industrial activities are becoming an influential threat to the environment, has to be managed. However, most business organizations are motivating to manage their environmental impacts and improve sustainability in business. This research focuses on the problems businesses face in dealing with environment and identifies best practice for business using the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System (EMS) framework to manage the environmental aspects and impacts within a company, with special reference to hotels in the tourism industry. The hotel industry keeps growing. Worldwide tourism represents 35% of the world's exports of services and over 70% in some developing countries (Zein, Wazner, Meylan, 2008). In Sri Lanka, Tourists' arrivals from 2009 to 2013 have increased emphatically. It is approximately from 400000 to 1250000. Average annual growth rate from 2005 to 2013 is 21%. (Tourism Development Authority, 2013). This growth directly accountable in environmental aspects because the whole population has to accommodate in hotels which come with unsustainable consumption practices endangering ecosystems and natural resources. 75% of environmental pollution caused by hotel industry was from over-consuming energy, water, and materials while operating business. So, hotel industry worldwide is currently getting more and more concerned about environmental issues (Chen 2008). Hence, hotel industry is unavoidable revenue to national economy there should be a compatible tool to balance its' incomes with the environmental costs. Otherwise profits will be

turned in to long term problems. To address such matters, an environmental management system is a proper way because, an EMS has the capacity to manage and deal with aspects that pressure the environment. It allows an organizational frame work to control the impacts of activities, products or services on the Natural environment systematically and continually while helping organization to reduce unnecessary costs. This research has reviewed the level of EMS plans in selected hotels which controls environmental issues grow out of hotels under its' several departments. Selected hotels were in different levels in EMS plans or they were implementing several environmental performances without EMS plans to control their impacts. So, there is a comparative analysis in these performances which help to identify advantages and barriers for an EMS plan.

Objectives

The general objective of this study was to analyze environmental performance in tourist hotels with and without Environmental Management System in order to recognize advantages of having EMS in tourist institutions. As well as identifying the level of implementation of EMS in selected hotels, comparing performances of environmental activities of institutions, and identifying advantages and challenges in implementation of EMS to recommend potential practices of EMS for tourist hotel sector were the specific objectives of this research.

Methodology

Sample selection was according to their environmental performance levels (with and without EMS plans). Institutional review of selected tourists' hotels has done by primary and secondary data collection. Respectable officials in managerial level have been interviewed and employees from each department have given questionnaires to fill up initial Environmental Review (IER) form which was prepared under six modules.

Results

According to the comparative analysis done with the data collected from hotels with & without EMS plans, there is a performance variance. But despite

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being hotels without EMS plans they are following some steps of EMS such as planning, implementing, and measuring. But the environmental actions needed to be evaluated, reviewed and employed corrective actions for continuous improvement which are not implemented in hotels without EMS plans. The hotels with EMS plans also indicating a performance variance in their EMS because, they have different levels of competencies, accessibility to technology, human and financial resources and efficiency in working. Also the attitudes make the process more success. If the involved people are thoroughly committed to accomplish their responsibilities well, the process can be executed well. According to the results, hotels without EMS plans are resisting to apply EMS because of many reasons. Such as negative attitude on EMS, lack of human and financial resources, lack of technology and time consuming, too much of paper work, employee resistance. But majority of respondents stated that hotels have the financial capacity for implementing EMS and there is a need of environmental management. Therefore, better coordination and guidance is needed for more widely environmental management. Commitment and the whole environmental performance have a significant relationship which means, commitment influencing the environmental actions in the process and it decides the improvement or decline of the performance. According to the results, hotels with a high commitment levels have implemented their process effectively.

Conclusion

Individual assessment of environmental performance will help any institute to understand the barriers for EMS in their own property and so that they can formulate the most suitable and preferable implementation strategy. ISO 14001 can be incorporated with government support and guidance to gain more reliance in beneficiaries. Also the successful EMS implementing institutions can be appreciated with government assistance such as awarding. Government should begin laying out the necessary incentives and standards to move the industry in direction of applying EMS. It will

be a motivation to hotels that have applied an EMS and also the hotels that are planning to apply an EMS in their property.

Recommendations

Hotel industry as well as any kind of industry can be advised on advantages, motivations and capacities for EMS and launch a process considering country as a whole to apply EMS. If there is a common criterion to guide small scale industries for EMS and if they assist with a prior investments industries can be motivated for applying EMS in their private property escaping their barriers such as Banks can open special lines of credit to finance the for further improvements. EMS education is comparatively less than the other subject areas related to environment. Therefore incorporating EMS in education more widely can be a reason to improve the motivation on EMS present as well as in future. Mostly, EMS in industries are operated by maintenance engineers, they have combined responsibilities on engineering functions. Therefore, important steps in EMS can be avoided or missed out. Appointing an EMS manager will be mostly effective in EMS implementation and its success. ISO 14001 for Environmental Management Systems should get more popularity that it is a systematic process of managing environmental impacts in any kind of institute.

Keywords: Environmental Management System, Environmental Sustainability, Initial Environmental Review, Environmental Impacts, Environmental Performance.

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