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## Quality Of Hotel Amenities Increase In Response To Growing Profit Levels

**NATIONAL REPORT—** There are many beneficiaries of the current upswing in the hotel industry and suppliers of amenities appear to be no exception. Whether its clock radios, irons or personal care products, guests paying significantly higher room rates than just a few years ago now expect and demand quality amenities in their rooms.

Hotels previously reluctant to invest in these added value items for guests seem to be re-evaluating their offerings.

"I think with the overall health and strength of the industry, hotels are more likely to replace and upgrade," said Tom Trent, director, marketing and sales, Sunbeam Hospitality, which offers such items as irons, hair dryers, coffeemakers, and clock radios.

Mike Stokoe, vp, national accounts, Marietta Corp., which supplies personal care amenities for the hospitality industry, has also seen a shift

in strategy.

"Hoteliers are focusing more on the offering of amenities that they put into the guestrooms more now than ever before. The focus is more on good, quality amenities with specific attention on the core items offered as opposed to offering so many different amenities which result in clutter in the bathroom," he said.

He added that higher rates may have helped drive some of the growth in amenities.

"I think that when rates rise, there is a need to provide something to the guests that is of better value," Stokoe said.

Trent added that the movement toward providing more amenities is no longer confined to higher end properties, largely as a result of the major hotel brands.

"There's been an increase in brand mandates at the mid and lower end," he said.

Stokoe indicated that this widespread popular-

ity has translated to an increased demand for name brands within the industry.

"Consumer interest in branded amenities has increased dramatically in recent years. People want a name they can trust. They are skeptical of an amenity offering that is not branded or which just has the hotel name on it with what is in essence a generic product," he said.

### Perfect Timing

Trent, for his part, has seen specific products, such as irons and clock radios, take off in terms of guest demand.

"We're seeing an interest in more fully featured clock radios," said Trent, whose company offers the Coleman Guest Rest clock radio.

Nowhere is the importance of clock radios more evident than with Hilton Hotels Corp. The hotel giant has gained recognition throughout

the industry as the result of its Hilton family alarm clock. The clock got its start with the company's Hampton brand, and is now offered throughout all of the company's brands.

"It used to be a rocket science challenge [to program alarm clocks], we got feedback from the guest that it was frustrating," said Mary Beth Parks, vp, marketing, Hilton Hotels Corp.

The clocks, which are manufactured by SDI Technologies, are adaptable to MP3 players through the use of a special jack, but its their simplicity that seems to stand out.

"It's easy to use, has straight forward instructions and takes a short period of time to set, and you don't have to worry about a previous alarm from the guest," said Parks. She noted that the clocks have a default feature that removes the alarm after a designated period of time.