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How Green the Desert? Examining the Environmental Policies of Las Vegas Strip Hotels

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Abstract

This study analyzed the websites of major Las Vegas Strip hotels, examined their corporate financial reports, and conducted two in-depth telephone interviews with hotel managers, all with regard to their “green” (pro-environmental) policies. The study found a distinct lack of evidence to support assertions that these properties had truly “gone green” in their daily operations. Thus, although the hotels might actually have been engaged in green procedures, they did not express environmental policy in their corporate websites or financial reports. Several possible reasons for this apparent duality are suggested.

Keywords

Las Vegas, Gaming, Casino, Environmental, Sustainability, Green, corporate financial reports

How Green the Desert? Examining the Environmental Policies of Las Vegas Strip Hotels

By Andrew M. Levey, Karl J. Mayer and Karima Abdel-Moty

This study analyzed the websites of major Las Vegas Strip hotels, examined their corporate financial reports, and conducted two in-depth telephone interviews with hotel managers, all with regard to their “green” (pro-environmental) policies. The study found a distinct lack of evidence to support assertions that these properties had truly “gone green” in their daily operations. Thus, although the hotels might actually have been engaged in green procedures, they did not express environmental policy in their corporate websites or financial reports. Several possible reasons for this apparent duality are suggested.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to determine by content analysis how major Las Vegas Strip (LVS) resorts marketed pro-environmental initiatives through their websites and corporate annual reports. The study sought to determine whether green message(s) were being communicated by the large LVS resort properties, not whether specific steps were being taken to go green at their properties. Certainly, pro-environmental practices throughout all types of businesses have dramatically increased in the past thirty years, as people have begun to realize the effects of uncontrolled exploitation of the earth’s limited natural resources. The arrival of the countercultural movement of the 1960’s exposed the world to new environmental dilemmas, a new way of thinking, and a new era dubbed the First Age of Green (Peattie, 2001). Changes began through new regulations and environmental legislation, but large corporations were reticent to alter their ways, as many believed change would dramatically increase costs (Peattie, 2001).

The Second Age of Green (Peattie, 2001) began in the late 1980’s. AIDS and famine were affecting many Third World nations; expanding media coverage was exposing an increasing number of manmade natural disasters; a chemical plant explosion killed 22,000 in Bhopal, India; the hole in the ozone layer above the Antarctic grew larger; the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant melted down; and the Exxon Valdez created an environmental catastrophe. This era

introduced the idea of global sustainability; the United Nations Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], 1987) stated that people can produce and consume at a material standard of living without endangering future generations. Peattie (2001) referred to sustainability as producing waste at the rate at which environmental systems can absorb it without affecting their viability. Sustainability became the first environmental concept on which governments, companies, and environmental groups could agree. It served to unite issues, legislation, and economics, and highlighted interdependence on a global scale.

Sustainability launched a renaissance of pro-environmental (green) ideas and concepts. Clean technology took the initiative during the First Age, but instead of focusing on the end concept, it focused on the design and production of goods. The consumer field also changed; many consumers quickly became green consumers. As the Third Age of green marketing has dawned, corporations face new challenges from consumers, the media, and their shareholders. Most research in this area has focused heavily on manufacturers' efficiency and corporate policies, as it is believed by some that competitive advantage is the primary driver of going green (Dummet, 2004).

The focus of this study was to determine the extent to which major hotels in Las Vegas have gone green (or plan to go green) by examining the frequency of environmental content on 28 large LVS properties' websites, including three major hotel projects that have not been completed as yet. Growth projections showed that 45,000 more hotel rooms were scheduled to be added to the LVS by the end of 2011 (Stutz, 2007), although recent economic events have led several of them, such as Boyd Gaming's Echelon Place project, to be temporarily suspended. When that project is finally completed, the environmental impact of the construction, employment, housekeeping, sanitation, and energy from this expansion will be enormous. For example, MGM Mirage's City Center property, the world's largest construction project in progress, is scheduled to fully open for business in December 2009. In addition, City Center is attempting to become Leadership in

Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified, and market this status to eco-tourists and other visitors.

LEED is an internationally recognized green-building certification system that was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, based in Washington, D.C. Actual LEED certification is granted by the Green Building Certification Institute, which provides third-party verification that a building project meets the LEED standards (What LEED Is, 2009). Early in 2008, the Palazzo opened as a LEED certified hotel, and Echelon Place was seeking to earn LEED status before its construction was halted. Further, Harrah's Entertainment is developing a "Team Earth" initiative for all of its gaming properties, including its two LVS resorts (Harrah's and Rio). This initiative will focus on using employee-led teams to implement pro-environmental practices throughout the company (G. Dickover, personal communication, 2009). Clearly, some LVS resort hotels, especially the newest properties, are making real progress on going green.

Law and Chung (2003) examined the performance of hotel websites in terms of information quality for different hotel categories located in Hong Kong, but they did not study casino hotels. The current study also analyzed hotel websites, but focused only on LVS gaming properties and the pro-environmental content of their websites. Thus, each property's website was thoroughly examined to determine what its current policies and plans were in four key areas of being green: management support and concerns for the environment, environmental planning, internal and external environmental leadership qualities, and validation or certification of environmental programs (Jose & Lee, 2007). The website and annual report analyses were supplemented with several employee interviews, and an in-person property visit. First, however, a discussion of the relevant environmental literature will provide background and a context for this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature is limited regarding green policies and activities in the hotel industry, especially with regard to Las Vegas hotels and casinos. However, three intertwined areas – Corporate

Environmental Responsibility (CER), Strategic Management Theory (SMT), and Applying Traditional Marketing Methods to Green Marketing (ATMMGM) – serve as a useful framework for considering green policies at hospitality properties. Accordingly, each of these areas will be discussed.

Dummet (2004) conducted qualitative research by interviewing chief executive officers (CEOs) in order to determine the drivers of CER, companies' environmental policies and considerations, and CEOs' attitudes toward corporate policies versus governmental and legislative policies. Lynes and Dredge (2006) believed the drivers of CER exist along a continuum: Some drivers exist within the specific framework of the corporation or the industry, and other drivers are external to it. Through his research, Dummet (2004) found ten common themes that CEOs considered major CER drivers in their industries and influences on their determination to go green: government legislation or threat of legislation (external), cost savings (internal), market advantage (external), protection or enhancement of reputation or brands (internal), avoidance of risk or threat of environmental accidents (internal), a "champion" within the organization (internal), pressure from shareholders (external), pressure from consumers (external), pressure from non-government organizations (external), and societal expectations (external).

Government legislation appears to be the leading reason corporations decide to go green. Emtairah et al. (2002) indicated that of 70 corporations studied with superior environmental credentials, 49 (70%) indicated that government legislation drove them to take greater environmental responsibility. Certain governments offered incentives as an attempt to motivate corporations; some legislation has even lessened penalties, taxes, and sanctions as motivation for going green. The idea behind such government legislative efforts is to create a level playing field on which everyone can compete (Dummet, 2004).

However, the effect on cost savings within corporations has not been fully realized. In Dummet's research, the subject of cost savings was not discussed until he brought it up. The common view is that launching new initiatives is expensive, with many initial and

ongoing costs involved (Dummet, 2004), including training, purchasing new equipment and materials, and reducing waste and consumption of these materials. One executive interviewed stated that if going green can become a “bottom line” issue, then it would truly provide an economic incentive for making that decision (Dummet, 2004). While examining accommodation establishments (hotels and lodges), especially smaller hotels and inns with more stringent financial constraints, Tzschentke et al. (2004) found that many United Kingdom (UK) hotel proprietors lacked the ability to exert control over the energy usage of their customers, which usage led to higher utility costs at their properties. As a result, the UK hoteliers chose to go green as a more cost-effective alternative.

One CEO described the advantage of going green as being able to achieve some marketing leverage (Dummet, 2004); thus, it may be a way for companies to distinguish themselves in highly competitive conditions. Miller (2001), in examining the UK tourism industry, argued that marketing advantage is really a stepping stone for attaining public relations benefits by spreading positive word of mouth associated with the tourism product. Branding appears to be the second most important driver behind going green. Dummet (2004) indicated that the branding topic was enthusiastically received and discussed among CEOs and executives, with one CEO using the term “brand promise.” A brand promise is defined as the ability to make life easier, more comfortable and safer for the consumer; it encompasses corporate environmental responsibility (Dummet, 2004).

Avoiding risk, or responding to an accident or an environmental threat, is a driver closely linked to brand reputation, as corporations are seeking ways to avoid potentially damaging incidents. Dummet’s (2004) research indicated that fear was a significant motivating factor for executives; for example, he found that executives did not want to be known as the “one who let an accident occur.” Two major environmental disasters – the Bhopal Dow chemical explosion and the Exxon Valdez oil spill – served as wakeup calls for many corporate executives. One Australian CEO commented that, “. . . it’s an awareness that things have to change. We are providing products to a global market; you have to embrace

environmental considerations” (Dummet, 2004, p. 383). According to Dummet (2004), there needs to be a “champion” within an organization who is driving the change to green policies and procedures. Most CEOs and executives believe that CER has to come from someone who is passionate about the environment and forces the corporation toward that goal. Surprisingly, pressure from shareholders was not one of the leading drivers of CER.

Interviewees believed that disasters such as Bhopal and Exxon Valdez led only to short-term drops in stock prices (Dummet, 2004). One former oil executive noted that institutional shareholders rarely ask or care about environmental impact and focus only on economic returns. Pressure from consumers is seen as a tertiary driver (Dummet, 2004). Interviewees believed consumers will become more educated and exert more pressure on corporations over the next five years. Since 2004, consumers have become more aware of the deteriorating conditions of the environment and have asked whether corporations are taking actions to go green.

The CER drivers tie in closely with Chandler’s (1962) SMT, which was further developed by the neoclassical view that the organization’s main objective is to maximize shareholder wealth (Friedman, 1970). Fowler and Hope (2007), in accord with a recent paradigm shift that holds that it is possible to simultaneously achieve shareholder wealth and corporate responsibility, stated that corporations can achieve “win-win” scenarios as they maximize returns while making progress towards the implementation of sustainable business practices. Fowler and Hope (2007) drew upon Hart’s (1995) Natural Resource-Based View (NRBV) in undertaking their research; NRBV indicates that while the pro-environmental issue has not yet affected some industries, proactive corporate environmental strategy can lead to development of corporate capabilities that can increase the firm’s competitiveness. The NRBV places emphasis on a firm’s resources, suggesting that by identifying those of strategic importance and employing them effectively, firms can achieve competitive advantage.

The third major area, ATMMG, takes a more marketing-driven perspective on the need to go green. One popular view is

that the rise of green consumers has demonstrated that demand exists for green products and services. Rex and Baumann (2007) asserted that any corporation can take the traditional marketing mix (price, product, promotion, and place) and adapt it for the green consumer. They used Kotler et al.'s (2001) marketing strategy framework of demand measurement, segmentation, targeting, and positioning to demonstrate how traditional marketing can be used to create a competitive advantage. They also argued that most corporations wrongly focus on making green products rather than fulfilling the consumer's desires; thus, in their view, the green market remains under-penetrated. According to Rex and Baumann (2007), current green marketing practices are limited in that they focus solely on existing green consumers. By using the full range of the marketing mix, instead of merely applying an "eco-friendly" label on the product, they believed they could much better position products to stimulate greater consumer awareness. Rex and Baumann believed businesses participating in green activities focus on "greening," instead of the actual customer; however, a property needs to first seek out its green consumers and fully understand their needs. Finally, Rex and Baumann also advised firms to market green practices by using the traditional "4Ps" of the marketing mix in order to reach a broader consumer base.

The literature is very limited with regard to green initiatives within LVS properties. However, the three most prevalent topics discussed above are interrelated and can be a blueprint for companies considering the adoption of green activities. An LVS hotel can use Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) in order to determine the drivers needed to launch green programs. It can also provide a property with chances to recognize the public's perception of it and improve its public image, thus leading to higher exposure, reputation, and profits.

The three topics identified in the literature present strategies that, although ideal in theory, are probably not being fully practiced by the hotel industry. More narrowly, the focus of this study was to explore whether the LVS hotels are communicating their pro-environmental actions through their websites and in their corporate

financial reports. The next section of the paper will discuss the methodology that was used to examine this issue.

METHODOLOGY

This study's goal was to determine the extent to which pro-environmental content exists in the messages contained on the corporate websites of 28 LVS hotels, including three properties that are currently under construction, or where construction has been temporarily suspended due to poor economic conditions. The 28 LVS properties, with over 2,000 rooms each, are all located along Las Vegas Boulevard, known as the Strip. The exploratory research involved in this paper was conducted in four distinct stages, of which the first two stages were the central focus of the study. The first stage was a content analysis of corporate websites. The second stage was also a content analysis, but of corporate annual reports for the firms that owned the LVS casino hotels. These content analyses searched for pro-environmental statements contained in the public information disseminated by the company. The third stage of the study attempted to interview selected property managers and employees by telephone, in order to discuss green practices being used onsite, and to determine how the property was communicating about those practices. The last stage was to conduct an in-person visit to an LVS property for indications that pro-environmental programs were being used in daily operations. Table 1 lists the properties that were included in the study, along with their sizes, as measured in rooms and total facilities area (Vegas.com, 2007).

As shown in Table 1, the LVS hotels that were studied herein are large properties, with an average of over 3,200 rooms and nearly 120,000 square feet in facilities area.

Table 1
Pertinent Facts - Las Vegas Strip Hotels
Analyzed for Green Content as of November 2008

HOTEL	NUMBER OF ROOMS	SQUARE FOOTAGE
Bally's	3,000	67,000
Bellagio	3,000	116,000
Caesars Palace	3,300	166,000
Caesars Expansion	1,000	37,000
Circus Circus	3,800	101,000
Excalibur	4,000	100,000
Flamingo	3,800	77,000
Harrah's	2,700	86,000
Imperial Palace	2,600	75,000
Luxor	4,400	120,000
Mandalay Bay/The Hotel	4,400	220,000
MGM Grand	5,000	171,000
Mirage	3,000	100,000
Monte Carlo	3,000	90,000
New York, New York	2,000	84,000
Paris	2,900	85,000
Planet Hollywood	2,700	100,000
Riviera	2,200	110,000
Sahara	1,800	85,000
Stratosphere	2,400	80,000
The Venetian	3,000	120,000
Palazzo	3,000	105,000
Treasure Island	2,800	95,000
Tropicana	2,000	61,000
Wynn/Encore	4,700	185,000

TOTAL	76,500	2,636,000
AVERAGE	3,060	105,440

In Progress Projects

HOTEL	NUMBER OF ROOMS	SQUARE FOOTAGE
City Center Project	5,000	500,000
Cosmopolitan*	3,000	75,000
Echelon Place*	5,500	140,000
TOTAL	13,500	715,000
AVERAGE	4,500	238,333

* Property construction suspended late in 2008 due to adverse economic conditions

TOTAL ALL HOTELS	90,000	3,351,000
AVERAGE ALL HOTELS	3,214	119,679

RESULTS

Website and Annual Report Content Analysis

A thorough search was conducted by navigating through four sections of each website: the home page, the menu bar, the news section, and the “about us” section. Basing their approach on the literature review, the authors performed a content analysis of the website, looking for seven key terms: green, sustainable, green consumer, LEED, environment, environmental, and recycling. If one of the key terms was found, the source was separated into either “internal” (from the company itself), or “external” (from an outside firm). If the source was internal, the section of the website and how it was mentioned were noted. If the source of the information was external, the source and date of the listing were

recorded. Both types of sources, internal and external, were considered valid “hits” for the purpose of this study.

The website content analysis returned disappointing results. Only one property, MGM Mirage’s City Center project, mentioned green activities, with seven items identified, all of which were from external sources. Another property, the Palazzo, which is part of the Venetian Hotel complex owned by Las Vegas Sands Corporation, became the largest LEED certified building in the world after it opened early in 2008. This is a significant accomplishment for any property, large or small. Nevertheless, there was no mention of this distinctive status on the Palazzo’s website.

Thus, after the first stage of content analysis, it was concluded that the property websites contained hardly any pro-environmental information. The next level of research was to examine each gaming company’s most recent annual report. More than half of the LVS properties are owned by two companies, MGM Mirage and Harrah’s Entertainment. In addition, some of the other properties are privately owned, so an annual report was not available (e.g., Cosmopolitan, Planet Hollywood, or Sahara). Hence, eleven corporate annual reports were reviewed. Once again, a content analysis similar to the website search was completed using the same key words as identifiers.

The second stage analysis yielded results similar to the first stage. Just one firm, the MGM Mirage Corporation, had any significant mention of environmentally related activities; however, these items appeared only in relation to its upcoming City Center project, and not for any of its existing LVS properties. Since the results of the first two stages revealed very little green content emanating from the firms or their properties, the third and fourth stages of analysis were pursued in an attempt to see what green steps were actually being taken, and why they were not being more widely communicated by the firms.

Managerial and Employee Interviews

The third stage of analysis was to interview managers and employees of the LVS hotels to learn of any environmental plans, new policies, or other steps that were being taken to protect the environment. Managers and employees were e-mailed and telephoned by the authors in an attempt to find out this information. Thirty-three combined emails and phone calls were made, but only two were returned, which led to phone interviews. These two employees worked at the same hotel and within the same department. The response rate for the phone interviews was somewhat low (i.e., $2/33 = 6\%$), so attempts were made to increase it by following up with the targeted personnel through subsequent emails and phone calls; unfortunately, these efforts were largely unsuccessful. However, since the third and fourth stages of the research plan were not the primary focus of this exploratory study, the low telephone response rate was deemed acceptable for purposes of the current study. Thus, obtaining more personal interviews on this topic will be left to further research efforts, which are discussed in the final section of this paper. Results of the two interviews that were conducted are discussed next, with the individuals' names disguised for purposes of confidentiality.

The first interview was with Mr. J. Smith, a manager in the convention center department at a large LVS casino hotel. When asked what actions the property was taking regarding the environment, he described a recycling program started in 2006 for which an outside company was hired to organize garbage and determine what was recyclable. A program like that, he noted, is measured in yards, and roughly 70% of garbage can be recycled. Within his department, the convention center started recycling all cardboard, glass, carpet, and even carpet pads in 2007. The option of using recycled paper products, and corn-based plastic ware, which is fully biodegradable, is offered to all conventions. He identified his hotel as being the pilot program for the rest of the company. In terms of other measures being taken, he explained the decision to go to a paperless format for convention bills; they are now sent via email or a CD-ROM. He mentioned that LED (Light-Emitting Diode) light bulbs (the most expensive on the market)

have replaced all indoor incandescent light bulbs. “We believe,” he said, “the savings in energy costs will help us pay off these light bulbs in six to eight months.” When asked about the drivers behind these policy changes, he noted a desire by top-management to be proactive. “Looking good in the community is the most important area. We want our guests to know we care about them and the community around them.” When asked about the lack of public information about these new policies, he stated, “Well, that’s partly our choice. We want to make sure we have all our ducks in a row before we go announcing it to the world and leaving it open to critics and naysayers.”

The second interview was with Mr. J. Blank, a catering department manager at the same property. Along with Mr. Smith, Mr. Blank also mentioned the use of recycled paper products and corn-based plastic ware. He said that he had not “...heard too much else that was being done, aside from the recycling project that the environmental services department is doing.” As far as the drivers for these policy changes, he referred to financial reasons: “the LEED certification for a property also gives it a substantial tax rebate. So if anything, it is a great way for the company to save money.”

As was the case with the first two stages of research in this study, the authors’ effort to obtain extensive pro-environmental information from interviewing personnel at the LVS hotels was disappointing. It strongly suggested that very little of what is being done is being effectively communicated by these properties. Thus, a final research step in this study was taken, in order to observe first-hand what types of pro-environmental initiatives were being used in daily operations at a hotel.

In-Person Examination

One of the authors attended a seminar at a large LVS property that also contains a Convention Center. Upon entering the resort’s Convention Center, the author noticed the use of compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) (CFLs are easily identified as corkscrew-shaped light bulbs) as opposed to LED lighting, which had been mentioned in the interviews. Following the speaker,

lunches were served in self-assembly boxed lunches. The first course was a sandwich wrapped in paper, inside a large plastic container; the side dishes were in plastic containers with corn-based plastic ware, and soda drinks were served in paper cups. Once assembled, the lunches were placed inside a folding cardboard box. Both the cups and cardboard were examined, and there was no indication of their having been recycled. The dining area featured two trash areas, neither of which had separated the recycling areas from the remainder of the trash. The environmental services department placed the boxes in garbage bags and, unfortunately, there was no chance to speak with the sanitation workers. In summary, this final step in the analysis showed some indications of pro-environmental steps being taken, but even these observed actions seemed more ad-hoc than comprehensive.

Hotel Examples Outside of Las Vegas

LVS hotels are some of the most prominent properties in the hospitality industry, but as evidenced by the findings from this study, they do not seem to be doing a good job of communicating their green initiatives. By contrast, many hotels outside of Las Vegas appear to be making giant strides in practicing and promoting their green policies. For example, Kimpton Hotels, a San Francisco-based boutique hotel chain, has launched an environmental program that includes using property-wide recycled paper, water conservation, and in-room recycling bins (Kimpton Hotels, 2007). In addition, an individual California-based property, the Gaia Napa Valley Hotel, is the first Gold LEED Certified hotel (Bennett, 2007; Gaia Hotel Napa Valley website, 2007). The Executive Director of the Gaia Napa Valley believes the hotel will serve as the prototype for hotels that want to go green (Das, 2007). According to Das it is estimated that the property saves \$50,000-\$75,000 per year in water and energy costs alone; such operating cost savings will pay back the original construction cost of the hotel in about eight years. Further, the Proximity Hotel, in Greensboro, North Carolina, is constructed almost entirely of recycled and green materials, and caters almost exclusively to guests who support its environmental policies and characteristics when they travel (Proximity Hotel website, 2008).

The website content of these three smaller hotels was also examined. The same content analysis was conducted, and all three hotel websites contained substantial usage of the seven key green terms. If such small properties can post their environmental activities on their websites, why not large LVS hotels? Small properties operate on much smaller budgets and may also have tighter financial constraints than do their larger counterparts, so it is somewhat curious that a small property can have so much more environmental content on a website when compared to a much larger property.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined the environmental content and policies of 28 LVS properties. Its objective was to determine what emphasis these properties and their parent-companies place on their pro-environmental policies, as evidenced by the content of some of their messages. Only a single company, MGM Mirage, has released a significant amount of information on its attempts to go green, and then only for its newest property, which is still under construction.

The authors did not expect this finding since there can be significant financial benefits involved in investing in green initiatives and practices. For example, many local governments have offered tax credits to companies with green projects and LEED certification. Adapting to pro-environmental policies can be initially expensive, but ultimately, it can yield major savings. Such cost savings will lead to higher profit margins and higher shareholder returns.

Nevertheless, this research indicates that LVS properties are not doing very much to promote whatever green initiatives they have undertaken, at least in the context of the media and methods that were studied herein. At this juncture, there is no indication that visitors to Las Vegas are demanding pro-environmental changes, and this could be a primary reason for the apparent lack of green communications from these properties. Further, it is also possible that green programs might be seen as counter to the needs and expectations of Las Vegas tourists and, thus, might not be heavily

emphasized by senior gaming managers; however, any speculation in this regard is outside of the narrow scope of this study, and needs to be investigated through future research on this topic.

Nevertheless, as tourists become more educated about the environment, or express more concern about it, this change may affect their decision to stay at a particular hotel. Some experts believe it will be difficult to scrutinize hotels for their green policies, since so many different certifications are involved, including third party, government, and proprietary labels (Bennett, 2007). Others say the scrutiny may be unavoidable as motivations for going green are sometimes questioned by the general public. However, although an exploration of the various reasons why the pro-environmental message is so muted at the LVS hotels would be interesting, it is well beyond the scope of the current study, which sought to determine what green messages were currently being conveyed. Future studies could explore this topic by surveying guests at LVS properties to ascertain their feelings about any potential conflict between going green and visiting “Sin City,” or about whether they expect LVS resorts to fully demonstrate a commitment to the international green movement. In addition, efforts to expand upon interviews with LVS senior and middle managers could shed light on the specific green practices that are being conducted by the major gaming firms, and explore managerial beliefs about the suitability of adopting green practices at casino gaming properties. Thus, there appear to be some fruitful areas for further study on green practices and gaming properties.

Indeed, the marketing of pro-environmental policies may be an interesting challenge for LVS hotel executives. The apparent juxtaposition of hotels conserving resources and contributing positively to the environment may be at odds with the marketing of “Sin City” to tourists who seem to want everything in excess. This may be part of the reason why those green initiatives that are being practiced are not more evident in the LVS properties’ communication schemes. Overall, it appears that Las Vegas resorts are at a nascent stage in the communication of their pro-environmental policies and practices. Only time will tell whether Las Vegas will become an attractive eco-tourism hot spot, while still

maintaining a reputation as “Sin City” for millions of tourists each year.

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