

LOEWS HOTELS SEE SERVICE CALLS PLUNGE 80 PERCENT WITH THE AMERICAN STANDARD CHAMPION® 4 TOILET

USA Today travel blog writer Barb DeLollis blew the lid off the issue of [hotel toilet clogging](#) earlier this year, spotlighting how Loews Hotels got a handle on the issue simply by choosing the right toilet. Dethroning inefficient toilets was also featured in [The Economist](#) and [AOL Weird News](#), which plunged into the cost and maintenance savings generated by efficient flushers – now commonplace throughout the Loews chain and several [Hyatt Regency Hotels](#).

Hotel toilet clogs “were just not acceptable” said Tony Rodrigues, regional director of engineering for Loews Hotels at Universal Orlando in Florida. “When you think of a luxury four-star resort, you don’t envision being embarrassed by an overflowing toilet.”

Taken individually, the clogged toilets were easily solved with a few simple plunges. Rodrigues’ problem, however, was that nearly 120 service calls each month required a toilet plunger. As chief engineer who oversees three of Loews’ properties on-site at the Universal Orlando Resort, multiply this plunger exercise by three and this unpleasant, and “completely preventable”, issue had inconvenienced roughly 12 guests each day.

“The root of the problem was the mandated low-flow toilets, which clogged too often,” Rodrigues explained. “Often, the guest would clog a toilet and they would be embarrassed and delayed in their plans. In other instances, guests would use the restroom just before checking out and it was only after several hours of overflowing water before we discovered something was wrong.”

Rodrigues turned to his corporate counterpart for advice.

FLUSH AND FORGET

“Suppliers had boasted about a virtually clog-free toilet from American Standard,” recalled Joe Thomas, corporate director of engineering for Loews Hotels.

“When we saw the [Champion 4](#)[®] toilet successfully pass a bucket of golf balls, we were impressed. And when we learned that it boasted the industry’s widest flush valve and the largest siphon trapway on the market today, we thought we had a solution for our problem.”

Indeed, Thomas and Rodrigues were so confident in the Champion 4, that they didn’t explore other toilet replacement options. Confidence aside, the pair knew they had to substantiate a recommendation to change out roughly 2,400 guest bathrooms with the new high-performance toilet.

Upscale hotels and resorts, such as Loews, generally perform “soft goods renovations” — replacing bedding, carpets, wall coverings, and the like — every six to seven years. More comprehensive renovations, termed “hard goods,” are scheduled every 10 to 12 years and include new furniture, tile and plumbing upgrades.

Although the three properties were all at least six years away from their hard goods renovation date, Thomas and Rodrigues felt the new high performance toilets were paramount in ensuring a top-quality guest experience.

Rodrigues devised a straightforward performance test by installing several Champion 4 toilets in each of Loews’ three Orlando properties and monitoring their performance.

After three months, he was stunned to discover that all of the “test” toilets performed as promised with zero guest complaints. Following the success of this 90-day trial, Thomas and Rodrigues were confident in bringing their unusual recommendation to senior management.

SOLVING TOILET EMBARRASSMENT

In 2005, Rodrigues convinced management of the urgency of the issue and was given the green light to include toilets in the soft goods renovation planned for the Loews Portofino Bay Hotel. All 750 Kohler® brand toilets there were replaced with Champion 4 models.

Following the change out, maintenance calls at Loews Portofino Bay property plunged more than 80 percent. That impressive performance record spurred Rodrigues to schedule similar upgrades at the Hard Rock Hotel® in 2006 and Loews Royal Pacific Resort in 2007. In all, more than 2,400 guest rooms were upgraded with the high performance toilet.

“Leading hospitality chains in North America are turning to the Champion 4 to provide a no-hassle experience for their guests,” said Chris Capone, vice president and general manager for American Standard. “The Champion 4 will move a mass that is 70 percent larger than the industry standard, which means Loews’ guests can flush with confidence.”

“Incorporating American Standard’s Champion 4 toilets into our Orlando properties has largely solved our toilet problems,” said Richard Senechal, AIA, senior vice president of facilities for Loews Hotels. “In fact, the product’s performance has been so dependable, that we’ve begun to incorporate the Champion 4 toilet at other properties.”

Senechal noted that the toilet is already present in Loews’ 439-room Coronado Bay Resort in San Diego, 414-room Atlanta property and 353-room Regency Hotel in New York City. Plans call for the Champion 4 toilet to be installed at most remaining hotels in the normal course of renovation.

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