



## **The Refinishing Touch survey finds two-thirds of hotels unaware of how to ethically dispose of unwanted television sets**

*A fifth of hotel owners surveyed didn't know any guidelines existed for disposal of e-waste*

**Alpharetta, GA – October 7, 2010** – The hotel industry is failing to educate owners and managers on how to recycle television sets, or often that television sets need to be recycled by state and local requirements. This is the key finding of a new survey conducted by The Refinishing Touch, a specialist in re-upholstery, on site furniture refinishing and armoire modification services.

The Refinishing Touch polled 103 hotel managers, operators and owners. It found that despite guidance, and in some cases state laws, to reduce e-waste, such as television sets ending up in landfills, two-thirds weren't aware of what the requirements were for safe disposal. A quarter (26 percent) of respondents were completely unaware of any requirements around television disposal.

Of the respondents, 13 percent were responsible for more than one hotel as part of a chain or brand, and each respondent was responsible for between 15 to 2,000 television sets within their operations, with the average of 176 sets per respondent.

When asked if they had recently purchased flat screen televisions, more than 39 percent said that they had bought televisions in 2009; while a further 24 percent said they had or would buy flat screen televisions in 2010.

Television disposal has become a problem for the hotel industry as independent and chain hotels look to update bulky cathode ray tube television sets and replace them with modern flat screen televisions.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the US currently produces more than three million tons of e-waste every year, including television sets and computer monitors, which hold high levels of toxins as well as containing important recyclable resources: precious metals, plastics and glass.

When asked how they had or would dispose of unwanted television sets, just under a third (30%) of respondents realized the need for an approved vendor to remove and recycle unwanted television sets; Six percent said they used junkyards; 15 percent advertised them on sites such as Craigslist. The remainder found alternate methods which included donating the sets to local communities, passing them to other smaller hotel operations or selling/offering them to employees.

The survey revealed that many respondents were unaware of how toxic the components of a television set are. When asked which product contains more toxins, a pack of 20 cigarettes or a television set, over a fifth of respondents (22%) thought the chemical volume was greater in cigarettes. Old televisions contain between four and eight pounds of lead.

Mario Insenga, president and CEO of The Refinishing Touch said: “The television set can seem innocuous. We're all so familiar with it as a product, at home and at work, that it's easy to overlook the dangerous toxins that are used in its construction. As more state laws and hopefully federal laws come into force, all organizations and individuals are going to have to review how they recycle TVs, but in the interim it's crucial to view e-waste from a perspective of responsibility. If you gave someone a box full of lead, cadmium and mercury and asked them to dispose of it, most humans would feel a moral responsibility to do so safely and wouldn't even consider throwing it away. Yet when disguised as a television set, people are doing just that without even realizing it.”



He continued: “It’s important that hotels, brands, managers and individuals understand how to ethically and responsibly recycle television sets. Since we launched our television recycling service in May 2010, we’ve worked with hotel chains, independent hotels, to remove and recycle televisions with ethical and environmental responsibility.

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### **About The Refinishing Touch**

The Refinishing Touch® is a world leader in on-site environmentally safe and sustainable furniture refinishing, re-upholstering, armoire modification, and EPA and OSHA TV recycling for private and public organizations. Through its Touch Textiles division, it provides eco-friendly indoor and outdoor fabrics that complement its portfolio of materials, such as granite and quartz, as well as a range of furniture hardware fixtures in a range of finishes to offer a one-stop service to its clients.

To date, the company has transformed over 1.5 million rooms of furniture, preventing the equivalent of approximately two million hardwood trees from being sent to landfill.

With clients in the government, hospitality and university sectors, The Refinishing Touch enables environmental and sustainability best practices while reducing spending by up to 80%.

Long term clients include: The White House, The Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, US Department of Justice, US Congress, US Department of Defense, US Military and Coast Guard, Hyatt, Marriott, Wyndham, Hilton, IHG and Starwood plus a number of top universities. The company was founded in 1977 and is headquartered in Alpharetta, Georgia.

The Refinishing Touch has been recognized by the US General Services Administration with its Evergreen Award for innovative environmentally friendly practices.

[www.therefinishingtouch.com](http://www.therefinishingtouch.com)

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