Things That Make You Go Hmmm?!
What will hotels do with their old furniture as they invest in new digital televisions to meet the state-of-the-art digital broadcast standards?

By: Brandy Schaffels-Thursday, 22 January 2009

It's really not something you spend too much time thinking about, but when you do think about it, it becomes quite a giant dilemma: In February, the majority of our television signals will be broadcast solely using digital technology. (Hawaii has already begun the transition.) The government has spent the last year in a broad education program to warm people that--as of February 17, 2009 --their traditional, analogue televisions won't work anymore without an upgrade to a digital receiver. It's really not such a big deal for those of us who get our signal from a cable company these days, and if you don't, any television purchased within the last two years employs a digital receiver. The rest have to buy a digital antenna receiver setup, available in such places as Radio Shack, Target, and even Wal-Mart.

However, as hotels across the US prepare for the analogue signal switch off and purchase new flat screen digital televisions, they must consider what they will do with the furniture that once housed the old televisions. While consumers must prepare for February 2009, many hotel brands have different deadlines to meet to switch to the HDTV signal. Also, for many brands building new properties, HDTV will likely be part of their offerings.

The financial concern for the upgraded televisions ranges from upgrading the servers that provide on-demand programming, to the actual TVs themselves and the furniture that houses them. Not to mention the environmental challenge of what to do with the armoires that housed older, and much larger, cathode-ray analogue televisions.

Have you been to places like Walt Disney World or Las Vegas? Have you considered the VAST number of hotel rooms and televisions in such locations that are going to require upgrades in service? (Light bulb goes off over my head and I whistle loudly in astonishment!)

These challenges are being resolved by refurbishment practices that are created and executed by companies like The Refinishing Touch. To date this company has completed refurbishment initiatives for major hotel brands such as Intercontinental Hotel Group, The Hilton Family of Brands, Marriott, Wyndham, and Starwood.
The Refinishing Touch-- which claims to be a world leader in providing on-site environmentally safe furniture refinishing, armoire conversions, and re-upholstery to private and public organizations--has completed the refurbishment of 20,000 wooden armoires in hotels across America, preventing a volume of 700,000 cubic feet and 2,000 tons of furniture from being put into landfills. That's a lot of furniture and waste they've eliminated from landfills!

Mario Insenga, President and CEO of The Refinishing Touch said, "Our approach solves a financial and an environmental problem, which in today's green-conscious and economic wary climate is a win-win solution for hotel chains, the consumer, and the environment."

Scott Matthews, Rooms Division Manager, Crowne Plaza Hotel, said, "We converted over 187 armoires in our Anaheim property alone during 2008. The Crowne Plaza recognizes the importance of recycling and managing our existing assets with the help from The Refinishing Touch. Converting the armoires on property for the new flat screen TVs not only helped the environment, but it helped our bottom line on the property."

Founded in 1977, The Refinishing Touch enables its 20,000 customers across government, hotel, hospitality and academic markets to save up to 80% of their budgets and maintain environmental sustainability.

To date the company has transformed over 1.5 million rooms of furniture worldwide, preventing the equivalent of approximately two million hardwood trees being lost to landfill. Services comprise furniture refinishing, re-upholstery, armoire modification and re engineering, granite and fabric selection through the Touch Textiles division. The company has patent pending waterborne material processes that are odorless, non-toxic and non-flammable and environmentally safe enabling immediate room re-occupancy.