



## Clearing The Way For Allergy Suffers

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By *Jim Merritt*

In a business in which ambience can be everything, there's a new opportunity to provide a breath of fresh air for guests, and not just by offering a choice between smoking and non-smoking rooms.

At a number of hotels around the nation, guests can opt for PURE Allergy Friendly Rooms that have been treated to clean all surfaces, fabrics, and room air.

The process of converting hotels to PURE rooms was developed during the past two years as a joint effort between Advanced Facilities Services International, Inc., a provider of bundled property maintenance services for developers, retailers and institutions, and Collom Enterprises, Inc., a Umea, Sweden-based worldwide provider of indoor air quality products and equipment.

An allergen-free environment has become an important lodging consideration for millions of American travelers, Brian Brault, founder, owner and CEO of Advanced Facilities Services International, Inc., said at the recent BITAC Technology and Operations show at the New York Marriott Marquis hotel in Manhattan.

"Over 70 million Americans suffer asthma or allergies," Brault said. As many as "one in four people need a more comfortable environment" than the traditional room, he added.

Pure Solutions, N.A., based in Buffalo, N.Y., has been converting rooms for the past eight months, PURE Allergy Friendly Rooms are created from existing hotel rooms with a process that begins with cleaning and disinfecting the air-handling unit. A patented process removes dirt, bacteria and mold from carpets and upholstery. PureShield, "a bacteriostatic barrier, is used to repel the microorganisms that can cause illness and distress to your guests," according to the company web site, [www.pureroom.com](http://www.pureroom.com)

The process also includes Ozone shock treatment to kill allergens, and the installation of a electronic air

purifier, "allergy friendly bed casings," and a massaging showerhead chlorine filter to prevent chlorine irritation in the shower, according to the web site.

At present 17 hotels, including the Peninsula Beverly Hills and the Conrad Miami, have PURE rooms. They are also currently available at the Hampton Inn in Amherst and in Buffalo, NY, Ellenton, FL, and Marlborough, MA, the Fairfield Inn & Suites in Clearwater, FL, the Four Points Sheraton in York, PA, and the Holiday Inn Select in Pittsburgh.

Brault notes that hotels generally start by converting 10 to 20 percent of their property to PURE Allergy Friendly Rooms. The process takes about 24 hours. The company services the rooms each quarter.

The rooms can be "set up as a room type within the property management system" and "packaged as a marketing tool," he said.

Training in marketing the rooms is offered to point of sale personnel, but the rooms don't require any changes in routine for housekeeping or maintenance personnel, Brault says.

The rooms offer a return on investment, Brault said.

Brault cited a study that said "58 percent of travelers" are willing to pay more for a room that has been treated to minimize contaminants and irritants such as mold spores, yeast, bacteria, pollen, dust, dust mites and chlorine.

Hotels typically charge a \$25 premium for a PURE Allergy Friendly Room, said Thomas Pickles, director of operations for Pure Solutions.

Many guests immediately notice the "before and after" difference of PURE Allergy Friendly Rooms.

Says Brault: "The first thing you notice is that the room smells very, crisp, very fresh."