



# OUTSOURCING

## Paris Healthcare Linen Services Changes the Paradigm to Outsourcing Laundry

BY VANESSA ORR

For many years, hospitals have washed their own laundry, thinking that it would save them money to keep this task in-house. Yet many hospitals today are finding that outsourcing this job can actually add to their bottom line.

"Most hospitals that have their own laundries have started looking for a better alternative,"

explained David Stern, president and CEO of Paris Healthcare Linen Services. "Often they are driven by the fact that their laundry area needs major capital improvements, or because they need that valuable space for something else. They may even call us because the person who has always run their laundry has decided to retire."

"From a purely financial standpoint, it makes a lot of sense to outsource in this area," he added. "To build an efficient



David Stern

laundry costs about \$15 million and it makes much more sense for us to build one that can serve many hospitals, than for each hospital to spend millions updating their facilities with less efficient equipment."

By creating a state-of-the-art laundry facility to serve many different healthcare entities, Paris Healthcare is able to save on energy, water, sewerage, and labor costs. "We can still make a

dollar and pass these savings on to our customers," said Stern, who adds that clients have seen savings ranging from 10 percent to 50 percent over their previous laundry costs.

According to Stern, educating the customer is key to helping them save money. "We work in partnership with healthcare facilities to determine what it actually costs to do their laundry," he explained. "The savings to our customers comes not



only from us doing their laundry at a lower cost, but from acting as a consultant in determining how much of each item they use and helping them manage against industry benchmarks."

While most hospitals measure and benchmark their cost per pound, Paris Healthcare believes a hospital's linen cost is what it costs to serve each patient. "There is a big difference. You would never see a nurse go into a patient's room and give them three trays of food, but that's often what happens with linens," said Stern. "Linen usage per patient should be measured, and nurses should know the cost."

"The result is that hospitals use less linen, which drives costs down," said Stern. "In no way does this shortchange the patient; linens are just used more effectively."

By knowing how much of every item is distributed to each hospital department, Paris Healthcare can also help hospitals cut down on loss. "Hospital administrators don't like to see a \$40,000 bill for lost scrubs," said Stern. "But if you can show where that loss is coming from, and can hold a department accountable, it often makes that loss go away."

On the face of it, it would seem that by reducing scrub loss and decreasing the pieces that need to be laundered, Paris Healthcare is actually taking work away from itself. "Most linen suppliers don't mind when hospitals lose items, because they can then replace them. The more items they use, the more revenue for the laundry," said Stern. "But we believe that it is our job to work in partnership with each hospital to help them manage their laundry requirements so that a department is never short of product, while putting controls on utilization. Customers will stay with you longer when they feel



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that you are partnering with them."

To this end, Paris Healthcare provides each customer with its own Account Manager, and a very sophisticated web-enabled information system. "We're very proactive about educating our clients and providing them with current, real-time information about what each of their departments is using," said Stern.

Paris Healthcare also takes a proactive stance on quality. "Most laundries take a reactive approach, measuring their quality by the number of rejects returned by the customer," said Stern. "We pull a statistically valid sampling of pieces while they're still in our system and check them against our rigid quality standards." Paris' plants are also all accredited by the Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council

(HLAC), the accrediting body for laundries that serve hospitals, which means that they meet or exceed the standards required.

"Our job is to help healthcare facilities save money while not sacrificing customer satisfaction," said Stern. "And we've done this by changing the paradigm of how laundry outsourcing is done."

For more information, visit [www.parisco.com](http://www.parisco.com), call (800) 832-2306, or email [Randy Rosetti at rrosetti@parisco.com](mailto:Randy.Rosetti@parisco.com).

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