



# Island Vista Resort

*Towel Tracker drives down towel-related expenses and enhances guest experience at luxury oceanfront resort*

Island Vista is a 12-story oceanfront luxury resort that features 149 suites, each with up to 4 bedrooms. Located in an upscale residential neighborhood in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, the resort sits alongside a beautiful white sand beach overlooking the ocean. In addition to the beach, the resort offers indoor and outdoor pools, indoor and outdoor spa tubs, and a children's area with splash pool, waterfall, and lazy river.



## The Towel Situation

With so many water-related amenities available, guests at Island Vista used an average of 650 pool towels per day. However, many of those towels disappeared on a regular basis. Marc Adcox, Island Vista's Assistant General Manager, explained, "We had very substantial towel losses for a variety of reasons, including everything from leaving them on the beach to taking them home as a souvenir." This resulted in Island Vista budgeting approximately \$10,000 per year for replacement pool towels.

Attempting to create some inventory control, the resort issued towel cards to guests, who exchanged them for pool towels at the front desk in the lobby. During the peak season, they exchanged their cards for towels poolside with an employee designated for that purpose. Despite this system, Adcox said enormous quantities of towels continued to disappear, because the towel cards did not provide identifiable tracking. There were also ramifications for the front desk staff and for the cleanliness of the lobby. Adcox explained, "The front desk staff spent a large part of the day trading pool towels for cards. Guests would also come through the lobby with wet towels, and having that towel traffic at the front desk led to extra efforts by the lobby attendant to stay ahead of the dripping water."

## The Solution

In July 2015, Island Vista Resort installed a Towel Tracker next to an outdoor pool on the oceanfront deck. The cost savings and associated benefits were immediate:

- **Reduced towel loss**

During the first 30 days of use, Towel Tracker dispensed 7,920 towels to Island Vista guests, and only 86 of those towels went missing. That's just 1.1% of the total towels dispensed, and since Island Vista's management team knows who took those towels, they can choose to address the towel loss in any way they wish. If they choose to simply replace the missing towels, this would cost \$5,366 per year, a 47% reduction compared to the \$10,000 per year previously budgeted for replacement towels.

- **Reduced pool towel usage**

When guests know their towels are being tracked, they tend to take only the towels they need. As a result, pool towel usage drops dramatically. At Island Vista, guests used an average of 256 towels per day during the first month after Towel Tracker was installed. This was a 60% reduction compared to the 650 towels previously used each day.

- **Reduced laundry costs**

With 60% fewer towels being used each day, 60% fewer towels need to be laundered. This has resulted in very substantial savings in towel laundering costs.

## Further Benefits

After installing Towel Tracker, Island Vista Resort experienced the following additional benefits:

- **Employee labor impact**

With Towel Tracker operating by itself, front desk employees no longer need to distribute and monitor pool towels, and a dedicated employee is no longer necessary for peak season pool towel duty. Between the time saved by the front desk staff and the dedicated towel duty employee no longer being needed during the peak season, the savings are significant. Furthermore, the hours saved by front desk employees can now be spent on activities that provide more value to the guest experience at the resort.

- **Cleaner facility**

With Towel Tracker installed next to the outdoor pool, guests and their children no longer walk back and forth through the resort lobby to obtain clean towels or to return piles of sandy towels that are dripping wet.



*“The Towel Tracker staff has worked closely with us in meshing their technology with ours. For example, we are automatically notified via email and text when clean and/or returned towel inventories need to be addressed. These actions are logged and provide a pattern of usage which allows us to be much more prepared to serve our guests. I am happy to commend both the innovation and the positive impact of the Towel Tracker technology.”*

*—Marc Adcox, Assistant General Manager*

## Towel Tracker And Today's Travelers

The benefits that resulted from installing Towel Tracker at Island Vista Resort align with the following key features that travelers, particularly Millennials, are looking for in hotels and resorts:

- **Ecofriendly Practices**

*In a 2013 TripAdvisor survey of over 35,000 people, 79% said they “placed importance on properties implementing ecofriendly practices”. In a second TripAdvisor survey of over 700 US travelers, 50% surveyed said they “would spend more money to stay at an eco-friendly accommodation.” The top eco-friendly hotel practice cited in this survey was related to towel usage.*

As mentioned earlier, installing Towel Tracker has resulted in 60% fewer pool towels being laundered at Island Vista. This has resulted in a corresponding drop in the natural and chemical resources used to launder towels (water, electricity, natural gas, detergents), which is beneficial for the environment.

- **High Tech Amenities**

*In a 2014 TripAdvisor survey of over 50,000 people, 77% surveyed said “Amenities are important when choosing accommodations”. In addition, “Tech-savvy amenities and features” is listed as a top hotel trend in a 2015 Huffington Post article written by US News Travel Editor Erin Shields. A 2015 Fodors.com news article added, “The hotel industry, courting millennials and other technology lovers, is implementing cutting-edge updates—fast.”*

Adcox stated that Towel Tracker’s cutting edge RFID technology has enhanced Island Vista’s guest amenities in the following ways: “Pool towel service is an exclusive amenity offered at premium resorts in the Myrtle Beach area, and does indeed elevate the guest experience at the Island Vista. We were also able to provide a larger, plusher, wide-striped towel from Towel Tracker to our guests for nearly the same price as the previous one, and the increase in towel quality is an amenity in itself. Guests love it, and have commented on the nicer towels and the ease of access.”

For more information about Towel Tracker visit: [www.toweltracker.com](http://www.toweltracker.com)