

Hotel-cleaning expert reveals all

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“Coming clean in your quote makes you too expensive”

SCHLIEREN, canton of Zürich – Hotels skimp when it comes to room cleaning, driving down cleaning agency prices, and awarding contracts to the lowest bidder. One person with experience in this area says that those who pay their employees a fair wage are completely out of the running.

BLICK’s report into cleanliness at luxury hotels has stirred up a hornets’ nest. Jérôme Gaberell (37) contacted our editors and confirmed that “quality is rarely of interest when it comes to awarding contracts; it’s usually all about price.”

Gaberell is a member of the management board at Bellevue Facility Services from Schlieren in the canton of Zurich. His company wants to grow in the hotel-cleaning industry. But it’s a tough environment. In the last quarter, Gaberell submitted three quotes for 600 rooms – and, as the second most expensive bidder, had no chance.

“My people do a really tough job”

“We clean various reputable hotels and recently decided to withdraw from a contract because the price was too low.” Gaberell pays his 70 staff at least 19 francs an hour, which works out to 22.40 francs gross including all bonuses. “I want to pay my people fairly, because they do a really tough job.”

But the fact of the matter is “if you come clean in your quote, you’re usually too expensive. If you pay fair wages, you earn nothing as a company”, Gaberell complains. He doesn’t understand why hoteliers are driving prices down when it comes to cleanliness. After all, it’s very important to hotel guests. “Cleanliness simply has its price”, says the cleaning pro.

No set times at the Dolder

Luxury hotel The Dolder Grand in Zurich, on the other hand, is proof that things don’t have to be this way. The five-star hotel has its own housekeepers, who always work in teams of two based on a set cleaning process. “Fresh cloths and mops are used in each room”, Ulrike Stehr, who runs the cleaning team, tells BLICK.

There are no specific times set for each room either. “Each room is assessed individually”, she says. It is approved by a supervisor before the next guest arrives.

The Nidwaldnerhof (3 stars) in Beckenried in the canton of Nidwalden also has its own cleaning staff and laundry. “Hotel guests are very sensitive to shortcomings in the rooms”, hotelier Rolf Stucki tells

BLICK. “Nonsensical time restrictions or penny-pinching get you nowhere. Guests will simply stay away.”