

# Winning Strategies



## Azalai Hotels Group

▷ Azalai Hotels Group is a growing network of 3- and 4-star hotels across West Africa. With three of those hotels in the capital city of Bamako, Azalai has a major presence in Mali, one of the most malaria-endemic countries on the continent. Despite high infection rates, a mosquito net costing 5,000 CFA, or about USD 10, is still a prohibitively costly prevention tool in Mali. But even costlier, managers say, is the recruiting and training of new employees hired to replace malaria-stricken workers. In 2008, managers at Azalai decided to intervene on behalf of the 250 workers in Mali, giving each two long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LLINs). ▷▷



### Company Profile

Headquarters: Bamako, Mali  
Market: 6 hotels in 5 countries  
Employees: 700  
Industry: Hospitality  
Challenge: To reduce malaria-related absenteeism among employees

### Malaria Interventions

**PROTECTION** LLIN distributions (2 per employee) since 2007; nets to be offered in hotel rooms as Malaria Safe initiative  
**VISIBILITY** UAM banners to be hung in hotel lobbies in 2011; cross-sponsorship of UAM and Tour Cycliste du Mali  
**ADVOCACY** joint discussions between Azalai management and members of Malian parliament to increase efforts to control malaria; free use of conference facilities for malaria-related meetings.



Above: a parliamentary forum on malaria, hosted by Azalai Hotel Salam in Bamako, Mali

▷▷ Since the intervention, managers say worker infection rates have dropped dramatically, from 750 cases per year to almost zero. The success of the net giveaway has prompted company leaders to look at expanding the program to its hotels in Burkina Faso, Guinee Bissau and Benin. Azalai plans to replace the nets in three years, as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Monitoring the malaria problem and its effects on workers, human resources director Boumedienne Abderrahmane says the simple net distribution stemmed from a managerial decision to motivate and encourage staff members to live healthier, more productive lives.

“All Africans are victims of malaria,” he says, noting that society as a whole is affected when one person suffers from infection. He counsels fellow employees to use their bed-nets and, when symptoms occur, to go to the hospital for treatment, not traditional healers.

With support from United Against Malaria partners, the Azalai Hotels Group is scaling up its malaria program to designate hotels in eight West African countries as Malaria Safe by 2012. The scale-up will include malaria educational brochures for staff and customers, malaria videos on the hotel network, and a company-wide policy that makes LLINs, mosquito coils and spray available to any customer who requests them, as well as the latest WHO-approved diagnostics and medicines, administered by trained hotel health personnel. The efforts will not only protect guests and staff from disease but also distinguish the hotel group from competitors. ◀



“Our goal is to be a malaria-free enterprise by 2012.”

## Mossadeck Bally Azalai Hotels Group President



**Azalai's president: "Let's eliminate malaria together."**

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