

# The Path to Productivity and Profitability

*A three-step plan all building  
service contractors can adopt*

By Mark Unger

When it comes to maintaining a facility, administrators look to building service contractors (BSCs) to provide a cleaning staff that will leave a building clean and healthy. In a time where money is tight, finding ways to present sanitary facilities to customers while saving time and money is critical.

Unfortunately, budget reductions can mean longer hours for cleaning staff and unfavorable working conditions. This could contribute to an increase in labor costs due to workers' compensation claims. In 2004, the U.S. Department of Labor reported close to 25,000 work-related injuries and illnesses within the jan/san industry alone.

To combat these issues while increasing a company's profits and improving worker productivity, BSCs can adopt three solutions into their daily cleaning schedules.

## **1. ADOPT A STRUCTURED CLEANING PLAN.**

BSCs should implement a structured training program and cleaning plan in order to create a safer and more efficient work environment. Leadership courses are available that provide cleaning industry supervisors with the necessary tools to train their cleaning staff on how to clean



first for health and then for appearance.

One example of a structured cleaning program is where each member of the cleaning staff receives training for a specific task. During training, explanations are given detailing the tools and chemicals required for the job so everyone feels comfortable using the tools before cleaning begins.

Once a training program has been established, a system that divides cleaning duties into teams should be adopted. BSCs should request a layout of the facility from building administration and assign teams of workers to specific areas. Within each area, every worker should be responsible for a specific task. For example, in a team assigned to clean the restroom, one member would be responsible for cleaning the floor, while another would be in charge of cleaning the toilets. This can reduce confusion and ensure the job gets done.

To keep operations running smoothly under the new cleaning plan, tracking systems can also be used to document training sessions and team workloads. Using either a tracking software program or a basic spreadsheet, BSCs can input the number of training hours or tasks completed right into the document. This can further guarantee that tasks are completed on time and in a safe manner.



fewer sick days. With ergonomic tools, cleaning staff can finish projects with less fatigue and complete a full day of work in less time, but with better results than with traditional tools. A facility that is safely and efficiently cleaned can result in happy customers and profitable business.

Today's budget constraints don't have to keep BSCs from producing cleaning services that reduce the risk of worker injury and profitability. With the

## “ ERGONOMIC TOOLS THAT FIT COMFORTABLY IN WORKERS' HANDS AND REDUCE ARM AND BACK STRAIN CAN PREVENT WORKER INJURIES AND ALLOW CLEANING STAFF TO WORK MORE EFFICIENTLY. ”

### 2. USE GREEN TOOLS.

Green tools such as microfiber and dual compartment buckets help reduce the impact of cleaning on both the environment and worker health. Cleaning professionals who use toxic cleaning chemicals on a regular basis can become disoriented from breathing in dangerous fumes. This can lead to a decrease in productivity and an increase in worker absences. A study done by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency showed that even a building with low levels of pollutants in the air resulted in 20 percent of workers complaining their performance was hampered due to sore throats and irritated eyes.

To reduce exposure to harmful cleaning chemicals, BSCs can provide cleaning staff with green cleaning tools such as microfiber mops and cloths that can be used to pick up dust and dirt with less cleaning chemicals. In addition, microfiber mops require less water than traditional mops and their wedge-shaped fibers allow them to reach deep into surface pores to remove dirt and bacteria by 96 percent.

BSCs can further reduce their impact on the environment and worker health by encouraging their staff to clean with dual-compartment buckets. Dual-compartment buckets keep dirty water separate from clean solution. This helps reduce the potential for cross contamination to occur, creates less water waste and allows workers to accurately measure cleaning chemical. Finally, dual-compartment buckets lower the risk of worker fatigue or injury by reducing the need to constantly empty and refill the bucket with fresh water.

Making the switch to green tools such as microfiber and dual-compartment buckets not only helps reduce bacteria in a facility, but it also reduces worker absenteeism and lowers insurance premiums, which saves a BSC time and money.

### 3. PROVIDE STAFF WITH ERGONOMICALLY-DESIGNED TOOLS.

Deciding to switch to tools that are ergonomically designed makes sense for BSCs who want to protect their staff and reduce costs. According to the U.S. Department of Labor and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), incorporating ergonomically-designed tools into a daily cleaning schedule can reduce worker injuries by 39 percent. Another study by OSHA showed that the addition of ergonomic supplies can lower worker sick days by 70 percent.

Ergonomic tools that fit comfortably in workers' hands and reduce arm and back strain can prevent worker injuries and allow cleaning staff to work more efficiently. Fewer injuries also means

right training techniques and cleaning system and the addition of green and ergonomically-designed products, BSCs can be confident they are presenting building administrators with a cleaning team who will produce quality work in a timely, cost-effective manner.

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