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A Virtual Success




ON MAY 18 **CONTRACTING PROFITS**, along with sister publications *Sanitary Maintenance* and *Housekeeping Solutions*, presented the Cleaning Innovations Virtual Conference & Expo. The event was a success, attracting more than 400 cleaning industry professionals. The virtual platform allowed building service contractors to visit a trade show floor, attend educational seminars and network with colleagues, all from the comfort of their own offices.

Attendees appreciated the fact that product information was easily and quickly accessible on the virtual trade show floor. You could either chat directly with a manufacturer or simply download the available materials.

Just like a live event, there was also a place to mingle with colleagues (though you had to bring your own drinks). The networking lounge provided an area for some great conversations among BSCs, jan/san distributors, facility executives, in-house cleaners and manufacturers. I had an interesting discussion about cleaning restrooms with water only.

Other highlights included a seminar on immigration issues by Steve Hendrickson, president of Porter Industries, a building service contractor who has earned IMAGE certification from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Also, attendees learned about day cleaning from Steve Spencer, facility manager for State Farm Insurance, which currently has 30 million square feet cleaned during daytime hours.

In my follow-up with attendees, I learned that owners liked being able to allow their entire company to experience the conference rather than just a handful of top executives that normally get to travel to live events. Though, if you were unable to attend, don't worry. An archive of the event, including all booth information and seminar presentations, is available at www.cleanlink.com/virtual, for the next three months (and like the event itself, the archive is free).

Contracting Profits and its sister publications will be putting on another virtual event this fall. Be sure to mark September 14 on your calendar now for the next virtual trade show: Cleaning Innovations: Green. Sustainable. Smart. As the name implies, this event will focus on green products and sustainable practices. Visit www.cleanlink.com for updates. 

Owners liked that their entire company could easily attend the virtual conference

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Cleaning Innovations Virtual Conference & Expo

Did you miss your chance to attend the Cleaning Innovations Virtual Conference & Expo last month? An archive of the event, which includes educational conference sessions on immigration issues, training janitors, recruiting the next generation and more, is available for the next three months at www.cleanlink.com/virtual.

The second virtual event of the year — Cleaning Innovations: Green. Sustainable. Smart. — will be held September 14, 2011. Visit www.cleanlink.com for updates.



Video Communication: The Next Frontier. Lisa Ridgely, deputy editor of *Contracting Profits* magazine, recently interviewed technology and marketing consultant Terry Brock. Brock discusses ways that cleaning industry professionals can connect and collaborate with customers, industry peers and employees using video programs such as Skype. View at www.cleanlink.com/cleantips.



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[Towel and Tissue]

Get A Handle On Green Paper And How To Curb Costs, Usage

Manufacturer Forum takes questions *Contracting Profits* has received from building service contractors and poses them directly to cleaning industry manufacturers. Each month questions and answers for a different product category will be featured.

Contributors:

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What is sustainable forestry and why should it matter to BSCs?

Tassoni and Ott: The concept of sustainable forestry means that we aim to reach for a balance between the environmental impact of cutting trees, society's demand for forest products and the prosperity of forest-dependent communities. These represent the three axis of sustainable development and by applying a number of criteria and indicators on these three axis, we are able to limit our impact.

Sustainable forestry is an important issue because deforestation contributes to 25 percent of the world's greenhouse gases, according to the Environmental Paper Network.

Connell: Given the world's continuing reliance on virgin fiber in combination with the rate of global population and economic growth, the world's forests are under more pressure than ever. Principles of sustainable forest management are no longer a "nice to do;" they are an economic, social and environmental imperative.

Third-party forest certification has emerged as an important tool to measure and communicate the social and environmental performance of forest operations, which allows building service contractors to signal to their constituents (tenants, facility operators, employees, etc.) and that the products they are utilizing are sourced responsibly.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting responsible management of the world's forests. In response to public concern about deforestation, FSC has developed a proven system of forest certification and product labeling that allows consumers to identify wood and wood-based products from well-managed forests.

FSC chain-of-custody procedures provide a link between the forest where the fiber originated and the product into which it is manufactured.



Can you help define some common green paper terms such as recycled fiber, post-consumer waste and Process Chlorine Free?

Sage: Recycled fiber is paper that has been reprocessed and is comprised of two types: pre-consumer waste and post-consumer waste.

Pre-consumer waste — this is offcuts and processing waste generated outside the paper mill and could potentially go to landfill, and is a genuine recycled fiber source.

Post-consumer waste — this is fiber from paper which has been used for its intended end use and would include office waste, magazine papers and newsprint. As the vast majority of this paper has been printed (either digitally or by more conventional means such as lithography or rotogravure),

it will either be recycled as printed paper or go through a deinking process first.

Tassoni and Ott: Traditionally, chlorine was used to clean and bleach fiber before it would end up as paper. This step is necessary to remove contaminants, including ink and color. While many manufacturers still use chlorine compounds, it is possible to use other bleaching products that are less damaging to the environment.

Processed Chlorine Free is a third-party certification indicating that no chlorine-containing compounds have been used during the bleaching process.



Do you see touch-free toilet tissue as a trend that will take off with end users?

Connell: There are several benefits to using touch-free dispensing for bathroom tissue. End users appreciate the hygienic benefits such as only touching the tissue you use and building services contractors appreciate the systems' hassle free performance and long battery life. In addition, touch-free toilet tissue dispensers can eliminate the "lost tail" issue, reduce consumption, and support ADA compliance.

Ray: Many bath tissue dispensers provide touchless service if loaded correctly (a tissue handle or end is present) as users can touch only the tissue and not the dispenser. Electronic touchless bath tissue systems potentially can pose battery cost and disposal issues which we see as inhibiting market acceptance.



Between roll and fold towels, is one more cost-effective than the other?

Tassoni and Ott: Generally speaking, hardwound roll towels provide a lower cost per hand-dry vs. folded towels. The user can use the entire surface of the dispensed towel for drying, resulting in fewer towels used.

Most folded towels dispensers allow users to wastefully grab a handful of towels. Moreover, few users take the time to unfold each towel to maximize the drying surface.

Connell: Hard roll towels have a higher capacity and are very compatible with controlled dispensing systems, which impacts cost-in-use. A major element of cost-in-use is usage or product utility and for more than a decade, we have examined the performance of its products and dispensing systems to provide the basis for determining the cost-in-use of various products and translate it into total consumption savings. In one analysis, switching from a multi-fold towel to a hard roll towel provided substantial savings in the following areas:


- 55 percent decrease in case consumption;
- 45 percent decrease in packaging waste (pounds).



How can BSCs help control towel usage and prevent occupants from taking more product than they need?

Tassoni and Ott: Controlled systems can control costs vs. universal alternatives, through lower cost-per-use and reduced labor cost. Such systems limit consumption through more absorbent towelling, which reduces the number of towels used per hand dry. Also, the electronic version of the dispensers provide the cleaning contractor with the ability to program sheet length and delay.

Ray: The key in reducing towel consumption by users is offering a good quality towel, which is absorbent and strong. Hygienic hand drying is all about dry hands...avoiding the potential of cross-contamination from hard surfaces.

By offering a good quality towel, which does the job with one portion of 16 to 20 inches per hand-dry is usually much more cost effective than lower quality towels when the price differential is accounted for. This is because users take another portion of towels if their hands are still damp or wet, increasing consumption per hand-dry. The benefit to operators is that they can increase end-user satisfaction by supplying a good quality towel, while reducing overall costs. 

Find More Information Online
Additional answers to these questions can be found at www.cleanlink.com/cp

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[Window Cleaning]

Frequencies Bouncing Back As Customer Spending Grows

By Lisa Ridgely, Deputy Editor

Janitorial services weren't the only ones taking hits left and right in the wake of the recession. Blows were suffered in many of the additional services offered by building service contractors, particularly those not integral to the health of building occupants. Window cleaning frequencies were, on average, halved — if not cut out altogether.

"Most of the services that were twice a year went to once a year," says Mike Behrent, manager of Brite Way Window Cleaning, owned by Jack's Maintenance Service Inc., in Neenah, Wis. "Things that were three times a year tried to go twice. Where you noticed the most was the extra cleanings. If

they would normally have you come in to do a spider treatment or clean around the doorways, those calls didn't even come."

Not only were frequencies cut to match slashed cleaning budgets, but a lot of long-term customers went out to bid thanks to competition from the flood of companies that were also feeling the squeeze.

Frequencies, prices on the chopping block

When the market was good, site visits would only involve a couple of competitors, says Ron Terry, director of window leaning operations for Complete Building Services in San

Mateo, Calif. In 2008, he started noticing the number of other companies bidding the work drastically increasing.

"When times got hard, you're starting to see 20 or more companies show up," Terry says. "I think what a lot of business owners of window cleaning companies at that time did was to go after quantity, not really look at the bottom line. Which, I think ended up hurting a lot of them because they were stuck with these jobs that they weren't making any money on."

Increased competition naturally drives down prices, as everyone is trying to offer a better deal to lure business away from others.



"When you're busy, there's a lot of contracts that might fall through the cracks, because you've got so much on your plate, you really can't go after everything," Terry says. "But when you've got a lack of work, you're looking under every stone for a job."

That, coupled with customer spending restrictions, drove down the price of window cleaning jobs.

Brite Way made it through fall of 2009 before it had the rug pulled out from under it when 80 percent of its fall services were cancelled. In 2010, there were no increases in frequencies.

Frequency of service, for the past few years, has boiled down to who the building tenants are, and whether they complain

"Now, in 2011, it's starting to creep back. I'm comfortable in saying there's definitely enough work out there if you're willing to look for it," Behrent says.

Behrent credits the diversification of services by Jack's Maintenance for acting as a buoy for the company's overall health despite a poor showing on the window cleaning side of things.

Facilities that cut back on frequencies included universities, municipal buildings, office buildings, insurance companies and law offices.

Some customers opted to work with their window cleaner for reduced rates.

"Hotels, what they did, because they hate having vacancies, lowered prices to fill up the hotels," Terry says. "Then they'd come to you and ask for a price adjustment based on their situation. So there are creative ways to try to continue service but at a lower price."

However, some facilities made no changes in frequencies. Homeowner associations, particularly for high-end condominiums, tended to stick with a schedule. Also, sport stadiums decided not to cut back. Brite Way services Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wis., home of the Green Bay Packers, as well as Camp Randall Stadium in Madison, Wis., where the University of Wisconsin Badgers play.

"Because the fan base would have been upset that they couldn't see through to look at the players, of course, they had us do their windows," Behrent says.

Frequency of service, for the past few years, has boiled down to who the building tenants are, and whether they complain, Terry says.

"At some point, management has got to take care of that or they're going to risk losing a tenant and that tenant is valuable to them," he says.

Jobs that used to charge \$1,000, for instance, might now only bring in about \$800,

Terry says. However, the company is slowly bringing prices back to what they used to be. Good thing, too, he says, as overhead hasn't gone down at all despite pricing taking a hit.

Window-cleaning being a service that cannot be put off forever, there is plenty of opportunity to now be offering solutions to window problems that are a consequence of past service cuts.

Consequences of cutbacks

Many factors influence the health of windows, and most of them are related to weather. Hard water stains and mineral deposits are caused by rain water that travels from other areas of the building's exterior and carries minerals from concrete, stone or paint that dries on the glass. Also, metal that frames the window can become oxidized, giving the glass a hazy look.

Those conditions can merit window restoration services if a cleaning cannot remove deposits.

"We've schooled the customer, if you're going to miss one service out of a two-service year, it's maybe not the worst. The fear is the customers who completely don't do windows for the next two years," Behrent says.

Those who skip window cleanings for a year or more are not going to like their final

bills once they do clean, he says.

"The rain is getting to be more acidic, and we've got a lot more pollution being put in the air," contributing to more buildup on windows, he says.

Window cleaning is also commonly paired with pressure washing of the building, since a dirty building can quickly ruin a glass cleaning job after just one rain.

"We say, why don't we power-wash that building and you know, we'll give you more life with your window cleaning," Terry says. "So you're cleaning the entire building. And that preserves the paint as well so buildings that are really dirty, most people think the building needs to be painted when it actually might only need to be power-washed."

The best way to keep window-washing services on the minds of customers, Behrent says, is to keep calling them.

"In general, if they're interested, it's a case of staying in contact," he says.

One industry trend that seems to be a direct consequence of customer cutbacks is an increase in the popularity of waterfed poles and high poles with a squeegee and mop head on the end, because it helps avoid having to rent a lift, he says.

Customers should beware that some window cleaners are tempted to cut corners to make up for that price differential.

"What a lot of people do when they start losing money, they start cutting corners. And when they start cutting corners, they have potential of accidents happening," Terry says.

Safety is of utmost importance when dealing with lift situations or when you are harnessing workers on a scaffolding system — and that is underscored by the role OSHA has taken on through a recent partnership with the International Window Cleaners Association.

"We're heavily into safety training, making sure all our people are certified and that we're always the safest company out there," Behrent says. "For us, OSHA getting involved is a good thing. A lot of the buildings out there need help as far as guidance."

What customers are now looking for, as window cleaning work begins to increase again, is added value. BSCs need to respond to customer service needs.

"At this stage of the game, you have to do things to differentiate your company from the rest of the pack," Terry says. "You've got to make sure the clients you have are well taken care of." **CP**

[Carpet Care]

Improve IAQ With Vacuuming

By Bob Croft

The fundamental reason building service contractors clean is to protect the health and safety of their clients' clients — aka building occupants.

Protecting health and safety ought to involve careful chemical selection and usage, non-skid floor finish, restroom disinfection, touchpoint sanitation, and prompt removal of trash to avoid attracting pests.

But perhaps the most significant benefit a janitor can provide his client is to improve indoor air quality. Consider the health impact of what is carried by the air one breathes. Dust generated inside the building includes soot, bacteria, allergens, paper dust, mold and dust mite droppings. Then there's dust from outside: pollen, spores, various natural environmental toxins (arsenic, lead, lithium, antimony), pesticides and fertilizers. Finally, there are fine particles, such as asbestos and coal dust, that can cause more than 50 occupational disease syndromes.

And it's likely to get worse. Desertification and poor practices in rangeland and farmland management disturb the soil, allowing it to blow away. It then finds its way into the buildings BSCs clean.

Janitors can do quite a bit to remove dust particles from the workplace: HEPA filtered vacuums, hard surface floor vacuums, microfiber dust wipes and damp mops. Fewer noxious particles inhaled by the client's employees means lower health care costs, fewer sick days, and a more productive, healthier staff at work.

Focus on the carpet

Unless BSCs are really behind on their high dusting, most of the dust in a client's building resides in the carpet — that's why carpet is called a "dust sink." A thorough vacuuming program will pull a high proportion of that dust from the carpet, and remove it from the building.

A vacuuming strategy designed to catch

the dust before it migrates throughout the building, involving aggressive vacuuming of entry mats and the carpet near entrances ("cross-hatch" those areas), moderate vacuuming of traffic paths (probably nightly), and

as/needed detail vacuuming (perhaps once or twice per week). Using a backpack vacuum allows janitors to easily reach corners, edges and under furniture.

Consideration should also be given to

VACUUM PRODUCT SHOWCASE

TENNANT CO. —

The V-SMU-14 single motor upright vacuum and the V-BP-6 backpack vacuum improve indoor air quality with standard HEPA 3-stage and 4-stage filtration, respectively. Both units are LEED-qualifying, CRI-certified and have noise levels of less than 70 decibels. **Free Info: Circle 325**



POWR-FLITE — The eight-pound Pro-Lite 8 Lightweight Upright Vacuum's brush action pulls the vacuum across the room as it collects soils and contaminants using a twin-fan motor.

Free Info: Circle 328



CLARKE — The CarpetMaster 30 wide-area vacuum received the Carpet and Rug Institute's (CRI) Seal of Approval. The 30-inch cleaning path and large capacity hopper enable cleaning up to 10,000 square feet an hour and its 10-inch rear wheels and front swivel casters make for easy maneuverability. It also comes with a combination of dual motors and optional HEPA filtration.

Free Info: Circle 326



SANITAIRE BY ELECTROLUX —

The Quiet Clean vacuum line features the SC5745A single-motor, bagless upright model. The vacuum features a slight frame for easy handling and a small, 13-inch cleaning path for maneuvering in tight spaces. The CRI-certified vacuum includes a HEPA filter and operates below 70 decibels to meet LEED guidelines.

Free Info: Circle 329



ADVANCE — The Adgility backpack vacuums and Spectrum upright vacuums have been awarded the Carpet and Rug Institute's Seal of Approval and operate with a sound level of less than 70 decibels. Both

UNITED ELECTRIC CO. — The "S" Wand is available in one or two pieces with button-lock or friction fit connection and offers a great finish. The tool coupling is available in two sizes and in either cast aluminum or gray and black plastic. **Free Info: Circle 327**



these features are requirements under the LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance Rating System (LEED-EBOM). **Free Info: Circle 330**

the proper vacuum filter. Everyone has seen the cloud of dust spewing from a cloth-bag vacuum. That's not a good thing for the client's indoor air quality.

Allergens (spores, pollen, bacteria, dust mite droppings, etc.) range in size from about 10 microns in diameter down to a micron. Standard paper vacuum cleaner bags generally filter out particles down to about 10 microns; dumpable cloth bags are worse.

Vacuuming with a standard paper bag (or, worse, a cloth bag) pulls lots of fine dust (and allergens) out of the carpet, and pumps it into the air. Fine particles can remain airborne for eight hours. So, if the janitor vacuums at 2 a.m., the client's staff is still breathing in airborne allergens come the 10 a.m. coffee break.

A HEPA filter will capture particles down to 0.3 microns in diameter, thus grabbing virtually all allergens.

Don't forget hard floors

Cleaning hard floors with a dust mop will not be as efficient as using a backpack vacuum. In open areas, particles slip under the dust-

mop and remain on the floor, and small particles become airborne in the flow of air over the top of the dust mop, remain in the air for hours, and settle back onto the floor, unless inhaled by an opportunistic passer-by. Corners and edges are missed (dirt piles up in the corners, day by day). Areas around and under furniture are bypassed entirely.

A rule of thumb in the industry holds that, when damp-mopping, janitors should expect to change the mop water twice as often if they've dust-mopped, rather than vacuumed, beforehand. Simply put, mop water stays cleaner, longer, with prior vacuuming.

The above holds true for VCT flooring. Imagine the additional effect of texture and grout lines in rough stone and ceramic floors. Most all dirt stays on the floor, and in the grout lines, to be turned to mud when the damp-mop hits.

It's hard to argue that the janitor with his dust-mop is simply trying to keep costs down for his client. Although a decent backpack vacuum (with hard-floor nozzle) costs a good deal more than the dust mop, its greater efficiency in use repays the purchase price of



PROTEAM INC. — The Super QuarterVac HEPA is a 6-quart capacity backpack vacuum that cleans 10,000 square feet per hour and fits any worker size.

The motor features superior airflow and static lift, and the HEPA and Four Level Filtration remove 99.97 percent of indoor pollutants down to 0.3 microns in size.

Free Info: Circle 331

WINDSOR — The Chariot iVac ATV HEPA vacuum is a stand-on commercial vacuum designed for use on hard and soft floors, including carpet, tile, wood, concrete, stone, rubber, and VCT. The vacuum comes in 24- or 34-inch widths, is battery-powered and operates at 68 decibels, making it useful for daytime cleaning. **Free Info: Circle 332**



Contracting Profits Magazine Sets the Standard for Leading Market Intelligence

Upholding our high standard of delivering timely, thoroughly researched information and cleaning business insight, we are once again sponsoring the following seminars at ISSA/INTERCLEAN® Las Vegas 2011 on Tuesday, October 18th.

.....
Target Your Customers by Understanding What Drives Them, Michel Theriault

Practice What You Preach: Steps to Becoming Sustainable, Stephen Ashkin and David Holly

Advanced Distributor Program: Driving Profit in the New Economy, Dr. Al Bates

ContractingProfits

For more information go to www.cleanlink.com

The collage features several covers of Contracting Profits magazine. One cover is titled 'Customer JING' and another 'STAYING IN TOUCH'. A hand is shown pointing at a smartphone screen that displays various business-related icons such as LinkedIn, a trophy, a calendar, a trash can, a checklist, an envelope, a camera, a calendar showing '18', and a clock. Text on the smartphone screen reads: 'The connectivity of mobile technology and social networking enables ESCs to provide better, more personalized service'. Below the phone, there are two blue boxes with white text: 'FACILITY MANAGERS TALK DAY CLEANING' and 'SERVICING THE HEALTHCARE MARKET'.

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[Carpet Care]

the vacuum in saved labor costs over the months to come. Further, the more dust particles removed from the building the first night by vacuuming the floor, the fewer particles need to be vacuumed, mopped or dusted off surfaces the next shift; saving time and labor costs, both nights.

In addition, vacuuming removes much more of the fine grit that, when worked in by foot traffic, abrades the surface of floor finish, requiring burnishing and eventually refinishing.

Finally, a HEPA filter on the vacuum, followed by damp-mopping with a microfiber mop (to remove any particles missed by the vacuum) gives one both clean, unstreaked floors and improved indoor air quality.

Vacuum, don't high-dust

It may seem a minor point, but many areas of high dusting that, when neglected, accumulate a lot of dust — vents, high sills, tops of high pictures — spread a lot of dust around the office when they finally are dusted, especially when using either a feather duster or lamb's wool tool. Neither of these products capture dust.

Perhaps the most significant benefit a janitor can provide his client is to improve indoor air quality

Most backpack vacuums come equipped with a small brush that fits on the end of the wand; the brush generally removes more dust than the feather duster would, and the vacuum and filter capture it. If janitors add a HEPA filter to the vacuum they'll remove virtually all the high dust from the building, rather than simply redistributing it.

Market the program

Once BSCs have a proper health and indoor air quality program in place, they'll notice that potential clients never bring up the subject. Most often, customers purchase janitorial service as a commodity: they consider all services about the same, and believe its best to buy based on the lowest price.

To get potential and existing customers to pay for vacuuming service that focuses on improving indoor air quality will take frequent education. Talk to manufacturers and distributors, surf the Web and keep up with industry trade publications. Also, join associations in related fields such as the American Indoor Air Quality Council.

Providing a healthier workplace through proper vacuuming will set BSCs apart from the competition. **CP**

Bob Croft is President of CBN Building Maintenance, a 34-year-old commercial janitorial service in Phoenix. Bob began development of CBN's system of "Cleaning for Health, Safety and Security" in 1995. He holds the CBSE designation from Building Service Contractors Association International. He's a member of the American Indoor Air Quality Council, a volunteer arbitrator for the Better Business Bureau, and serves on the City of Phoenix Environmental Quality Commission.

[Ashkin On Green]

Why Green And Sustainable Are NOT The Same

As more manufacturers have entered the green market, they have found that just supplying green products or services is no longer enough to differentiate themselves from the competition. As a result, more companies have started using terms such as “sustainability” and “sustainable products” to market their products and programs as superior compared to standard green offerings. The challenge is that in most cases the term sustainable is being used interchangeably with green, which is incorrect.

“Green” focuses on environmental impacts along with how products and services impact people’s health. It is important to emphasize that impacts on people is limited only to the impacts on health. Whereas sustainability encompasses much, much more.

Beyond addressing the environment and impacts on people’s health, sustainability goes on to look much more deeply at other ways that people’s lives are affected. It considers workers’ wages, diversity, community engagement, philanthropy and other social equity issues. Sustainability also encompasses broad environmental issues such as those related to product manufacturing, sources of raw materials, or impacts throughout its supply chain.

Green is a terrific first step that is changing and improving the cleaning industry. But as a first step it is limited. For example, a green product could be made from child or slave labor in some developing country but still be considered environmentally preferable because compared to traditional products it meets green’s definition of reducing “health and environmental impacts compared to similar products.”

Furthermore, a legitimate green product typically doesn’t even consider the complete manufacturing



By Stephen Ashkin

impacts of the product over its entire life-cycle. A green product is acceptable as long as it doesn’t create greater negative impacts compared to the traditional product, and while this is good it does not mean that it has NO negative impacts. Addressing a broader array of environmental, social and financial impacts is what the next step of sustainability will force us to consider.

So when a manufacturer markets a product as being sustainable it is important to determine if they are simply using

this term interchangeably with green, or can they document that their product, the manufacturing process, as well as the company that made the product, along with their entire supply chain, have addressed the financial, environmental and social equity issues required by the likes of the Global Reporting Initiative.

If all claims can’t be documented, then building service contractors should just stick with the term “green” when touting the products used in their cleaning programs until these broader claims can be justified. If you are using questionable sustainability claims to support that your program is sustainable, just beware because green and sustainable simply are not the same thing — and your customers are learning the difference, too. **CP**

Stephen Ashkin is president of The Ashkin Group and executive director of the Green Cleaning Network. He can be reached at ashkin@tradepress.com.

Stephen and David Holly will be presenting the seminar, “Practice What Your Preach: Steps to Becoming Sustainable,” at ISSA/INTERCLEAN in Las Vegas on Tuesday, Oct. 18. The session is being sponsored by Housekeeping Solutions, a sister publication of Contracting Profits.



ONE-STOP SHOP

BSCs are realizing new income streams by introducing a **wide array of services** — from grounds care and pest control to restoration and security

By Lisa Ridgely, Deputy Editor

MANY OWNERS, PRESIDENTS and other executives who work for building service contracting companies take great pride in how well they know janitorial work. They've been in the business for years — sometimes having started as janitors themselves — and have spent a lot of time and money making sure their employees are trained, their companies are insured and certified, and their customers are satisfied.

However, the era of simply cleaning buildings has long since passed; these

days, janitorial may remain a core service, but most building service contractors have realized that, to customers, the value of their companies has as much to do with the quality of service as the convenience of being able to satisfy a number of needs using one service provider.

In a nutshell: if janitorial services are already being sold to a number of customers, why not sell them more?

Through launching new service branches, strategic partnerships with other service

providers, acquisitions and subcontracting, BSCs are striving to create solutions for customers rather than direct their business — and that revenue — elsewhere.

"It just makes you more valuable," says John Ezzo, president of New Image Building Services in Mount Clemons, Mich. "It makes you less disposable because to get rid of you, they have to get rid of multiple service disciplines instead of just one."

Smart diversification of services requires recognizing what customers need,



identifying important background experience in existing management-level employees, hiring of additional managers and the capital to fund the expansion.

It also necessitates paying attention to and responding to service trends and customer needs.

"Cleaning is still absolutely, positively the core business. It continues to be the biggest line item in most people's budgets," says John Barrett, president of Euresit Services, Wayne, Pa. "But we are seeing dramatic increases in complementary services. The rate of change has increased significantly and what we're finding is strategic sourcing organizations continue to drive value into their companies."

Euresit is a huge facility services company, and many of its large customers are looking to consolidate spend with capable service providers. While janitorial and other interior services have been the traditional focus of business, Euresit is investing in new capabilities with a focus on exterior services, which hold a great deal of promise, Barrett says.

Another key to successful diversification is knowing who is making the purchasing decisions.

"We've been careful to diversify only those services that are being purchased by the same person," says Ezzo. "If the facility manager is purchasing the security and the cleaning and the repair work, you don't have to try to sell to a different office at that client — we can sell all to the same person."

The trend in purchasing is consolidation, so it makes sense to appeal to these decision-makers in purchasing by offering multiple services, Ezzo says.

Where to start

Opportunities to diversify can come in many different forms. Barrett recommends forming an internal strategy to use the strengths found in a company's existing management.

"I think the best place to start is to look within your firm to see what expertise might reside in the management," Barrett says. "Most people didn't do cleaning

their whole lives — they did a lot of other things. You might find that there's a core skill set in some of your management team that can form the basis for an external examination of your clients in your markets to see if there are any opportunities that can be exploited."

It's possible that managers working for BSCs have experience in landscaping, HVAC or other disciplines. Building a service offering on the skill sets that managers already possess is one option that prevents companies from having to start from scratch, Barrett adds.

Being able to fund a new venture, is, of course, vital to ensuring a successful start. Banks are starting to lend money again, and money is also freeing up in private equity funds looking to invest in the industry.

Ezzo recommends companies diversify while they have profits to divert.

"If you're going to launch diversification, do it before it's too late, when you're profitable enough that you can fund it out of your current cash flow," he says.

Contractors agree that it's extremely

Cover Story

important to hire the right personnel. Not only do they need to have the expertise to do the job well, but they need to be trustworthy, open-minded and willing to learn as much from a BSC as the BSC is willing to learn from them.

BSCs are used to being able to handle janitorial-related aspects of company business, especially related to customer service and relationship management, so it can be difficult to give up control of accounts to someone who has expertise in other services.

"A lot of small business owners have those relationships themselves and they protect those relationships, but if you're going to diversify into something you're not experienced in, something more technical for example, you need to be more open-minded to loosening that and allowing those people to interface with the client," Ezzo says. "So, it's all about finding the

"We've stayed focused on putting all of our eggs in one service delivery basket," says Paul Senecal, president. "So what we've done is diversify our client group. Instead of responding to RFPs and letting the market dictate who we do business with, we make a cognizant decision of who we want to do business with and then we go after those people and we let the other opportunities go by unless they're literally dropped in our lap."

While offering services such as landscaping and security might be something Senecal's customers would take advantage of, United Services made a decision to stay

In the years that he has been in the cleaning industry, Senecal says he has never seen anyone do multiple service offerings exceptionally well.

"I've seen people do it well, but not exceptionally well," he says. "Hard to be all things to all people."

But focusing on additional service offerings is manageable, Ezzo says.

"Some people say to me, 'Isn't it risky?'" Ezzo says. "My answer is, 'I'm still limited in focus to providing building services.'"

Diversification has proven to be lucrative and a wise business move for many building service contractors that seize upon opportunities and provide the structure for success and growth for those additional services. Responding to customer needs remains the highest calling for BSCs, no matter what services they decide to provide.



Cleaning is still absolutely, positively the **core business**. But we are seeing dramatic increases in complementary services

right people that you can work with and you can trust."

He warns BSCs that they have to be willing to give up some control to those who know what they're doing. An owner's job is to support the business: provide funding, access to clientele, oversight, human resources, accounting and administration. When it comes to the technical side of things, let the experts handle it, he says.

"The last thing you want to do is screw up the business because you think you know, and you don't know," Ezzo says.

Don't lose sight of core services

Some BSCs prefer to stay focused on what they do know — janitorial — rather than risk spreading themselves too thin and underperforming on services. Diversification, for United Services of America in Stamford, Conn., has meant diversifying its client base rather than its service offerings.

focused on cleaning. The additional services they do offer, painting for example, draw from the same labor pool, have the same customers and is similar to janitorial work.

Landscaping might draw from the same labor pool and have a similar customer base, but the work is much different. Security service has the same customer base, but is so operationally different in terms of labor pools and skill sets, it was not a desirable option, Senecal says.

The problem with diversifying, he says, is that, while it's true that providing more services makes a company harder to replace, it also has the potential to expose a weak link that could affect an entire account.

"Your weakest link becomes your biggest problem," Senecal says. "If you make a mistake landscaping, which is the smallest of all those revenue sources, and you lose your cleaning and security account, you've got a problem."

Responding to customer needs

Ezzo's company is diversified in a number of areas but his experience entering into security services has provided him with many valuable lessons, which he shares freely with fellow members of Building Service Contractors Association International (BSCAI). Last year, he gave a presentation on diversification at the association's annual convention, and there he shared the ups and downs of taking on the new service.

It started as an acquisition, but those negotiations fell apart just days before it was supposed to finalize. Since Ezzo had already set aside funds for the acquisition, he decided to hire the security firm's manager and started a security service on his own. And it wasn't smooth sailing from the beginning, but in the past two years since the launch, things have stabilized and are turning a profit.

From a labor management standpoint, security makes sense, Ezzo says.

"Cleaning is labor-intensive, so it requires you to have a good recruiting strategy, to have good background checks, to have good training, to supervise, manage and motivate people," he says. "Security is the same thing. So you're hiring from basically the same labor pool, along the same wages."

Security and handyman repair services have been Ezzo's two most popular services — and especially since the

COMMON DIVERSIFIED SERVICES

- staffing
- facility services (including painting, office support and mail room)
- special project services
- window cleaning
- fire/water restoration
- parking lot maintenance
- landscaping
- snow removal
- pest control
- construction site cleanup
- security
- carpet care
- matting services
- graffiti removal

recession forced many customers to cut back on cleaning budgets, having other services that are more in demand has definitely helped the overall bottom line.

It's difficult to understate the effect the recession has had on diversification trends for BSCs. While some services have suffered drastic cuts, others have flourished — sometimes, ironically, due to those cuts.

Not only did office building customers cut back on waste removal frequencies, but office workers have cut back their own spending on eating out and now eat lunch at their desks more often, says Jill Frey, president of Cummins Facility Services in Marion, Ohio. And that created a perfect storm for pest attraction.

"When we saw clients go toward three-day-a-week trash removal, that also created the need for bug termination," Frey says. "It's gone hand-in-hand. People don't understand when they don't throw their trash out every day, why there are more bugs."

Cummins had started offering pest control services about five years ago, but has been able to capitalize on the cutbacks to janitorial services of the past few years, as well as the recent bed bug epidemic.

"It's one more added service that you can provide to your clients very inexpensively," Frey says.

The company also just launched a snow removal service in 2010, and had an extremely good first winter — thanks in huge part to a active winter weather systems that pounded much of the United States.

However, what's a good investment for one BSC may not be the best choice for another — and that goes for all services, but

particularly ones that are heavily regulated like pest control.

"We don't self-perform any pest control," says Paul Greenland, president of Aetna Building Services in Columbus, Ohio. "The certifications and regulations are pretty strict; when our customers ask for it, we'll bring in a subcontractor partner."

Subbing it out

Subcontracting, or bringing in another contractor to provide a specific service to a current customer, helps BSCs provide a richer portfolio of services to their clients.

The practice, however, may be on the decline due to the trend of diversification, in which BSCs absorb those services into their own companies, as well as the trend of illegal subcontracting, which has been on the rise for years and can threaten the reputation of a company.

Also, says Senecal, it's just not that profitable.

"We did [more subcontracting] in the past, but there's not enough money to be made in subcontracting things," says Senecal. "Most people who are sophisticated buyers see what a middle man is and wonder why they're paying for the middle man."

Subcontracting isn't much of a consideration for many of the BSCs Ezzo has visited with.

"If they're going to be diversified, they're going to do it themselves, either through acquisition or starting up another business unit," he says.

Most of Aetna's diversified services, such as concrete polishing and industrial painting, have been offered for more than a decade, and they've all been driven by customer need. The company began to offer facility services such as office support, painting, contract management and maintenance, about six years ago after it acquired a

small facility services company and brought the owner aboard to run all of Aetna's facilities. Aetna now sells facility services to other customers.

The key with that acquisition was bringing the owner's expertise aboard.


"His expertise is really on doing the facility services stuff, not on sales and marketing and administration," Greenland says. "We're already running all that for 1,200 employees so it was really no

big deal to tuck that into our business. But where we lacked the expertise was on the facility services side. So it was a really good partnership."

Greenland sees the need for facility services growing. Most European BSCs are already providing them, so it may be only a matter of time before that trend hits the United States. While some big players are providing it on a large scale, and some small companies are doing it on a small scale, he isn't seeing much competition from other mid-market sized companies, which give Aetna a decided edge.

"The big property management companies don't want to get involved in the smaller facilities and the smaller facilities can't afford to have someone on staff, so it makes sense for a service provider such as ourselves to be the one-stop shop for everything from changing light bulbs to fixing doors to coordinating trash removal," Greenland says.

Ultimately, BSCs are doing the best they can to provide quality solutions to their customers — and they'll do whatever it takes to achieve that objective. Solving problems solidifies relationships with customers, building the bonds of trust that matter so much in the post-recession environment.

"It's really fun for me," says Frey. "My clients can pick up the phone and say, 'This is what we need. Can you do this for us?' I feel like they trust me to take care of them and their employees as well." 



In Schools, Cleaning For Health Prioritizes Children's Wellness

As outsourcing of educational accounts continues to rise, BSCs are developing partnerships by providing green expertise

By Lisa Ridgely, Deputy Editor

FROM DAY CARE CENTERS to universities, and public schools to private schools, educational facilities are in a cleaning class of their own. The outsourcing of janitorial and other service work is a trend that has been on the rise, and was particularly accelerated by the recession, which has forced many schools, especially K-12 facilities, to tighten spending.

As many states face fiscal crises that are affecting school funding, and as many parents are finding it harder to send their

children to private schools, school administrators are looking for solutions. Building service contractors have answered the call, becoming experts in their own right on green cleaning and cleaning for health in schools.

Kids are top priority

PMM Companies, Rockville, Md., earned the GS-42 Green Seal Environmental Leadership Standard for Cleaning Services certification, partially with the intention of becoming the expert partners educational facilities need to protect the health of their occupants — something that is of utmost importance in society.

“Any time you’re dealing with kids, health, education, the environment — they’re just high priorities,” says Mitch Lustig, executive vice president. “And that’s any kid, whether they’re in the most prestigious of schools or some of the inner city schools. Children’s health and environments are paramount to everybody.”

Outsourcing allows schools to cut back on the budget without sacrificing quality or the well-being of students.

“The last thing schools want to do is cut their programs, so facilities is a big bucket where they can look to be more efficient,” Lustig says.

Schools with progressive green agendas seek out BSCs with certifications such as GS-42, a standard which outlines requirements in planning, products, supplies, equipment, cleaning procedures, communications and training.

“Some schools are very knowledgeable and have done a lot of homework and research and know exactly the kind of company they want to deal with,” Lustig says.

Employees of Better Business Cleaning tackle classrooms at a private school in Colorado.



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Market Profile

The educational facilities serviced by PMM include a number of independent private schools, public charter schools and universities in Maryland and Washington, D.C.

"It's particularly important in independent schools, where many of the schools have green committees," Lustig says. "It's very important to them, the recycling aspect, sustainability and those things, and having students participate, so being experts on that is a lot of added value for them."

Unlike commercial clients, public schools are regulated by states, and in 2007, the green cleaning in schools legislative movement took off; in the years since, seven states have passed green cleaning in schools mandates, including Maryland, Illinois, Iowa and New York, and others have issued recommendations. Though it has been a few years since the green cleaning in schools legislative movement seemed to peak, BSCs should be paying close attention to government mandates that affect what products they use to clean.

Jim Sutton, president of Better Business Cleaning in Erie, Colo., knows the importance of using the right chemicals around a vulnerable population — his company services day care centers, where the youngest of children not only make the biggest of messes, but also may be literally eating off the floor.

"It can be pretty intense," Sutton says. "You're looking for chemicals that will disinfect and clean well without leaving a residue and are going to be healthy for the kids."

Personnel

Another aspect of protecting a vulnerable child population is screening who will come into contact with them. BSCs who work with K-12 schools need to be extremely particular in their hiring practices.

"We're pretty careful about screening in general, but our standards for educational facilities are very high," Sutton says.

A common concern in K-12 schools that are switching to outsourced cleaning is regarding the new janitorial staff; parents read news articles about janitors with criminal tendencies and want to know their children are going to be safe.

It's not uncommon for BSCs to provide the opportunity for former in-house employees to reapply with the vendor, Lustig says, so sometimes staff is retained.

The janitors working in schools for PMM undergo thorough background checks, including sex offender lists in all 50 states and fingerprinting.

The amount of training needed for school janitors is a bit more intensive than for a typical office-cleaning position, Lustig says.

"The first time they see an art project go awry, they want to run out of the school if they're not trained properly," he says. "Schools get trashed, and the expectation is, the school is going to be ready at a very high level the next day, so if you're not extremely detail-oriented as a company, it's probably not a good place for you."

Know your customers

The work itself in educational facilities is quite different from most other accounts. Carpet work, for instance, might have similar specs to other types of accounts, but the actual work is going to be more labor-intensive.

"For example, vacuuming — the spec would be different in that you perform a full vacuum every night," Sutton says. "But the workloading of a 'full vacuum' is different than doing an office space, because you're vacuuming up food crumbs and other items, like macaroni ground into the floor."

Because the nature of the work is so tied to the health of occupants, BSCs become much more of a partner to schools. Generally, they are very involved in the cleaning procedures compared to most other commercial clients.

In the privately-owned day care center serviced by Better Business Cleaning, the owner is very particular about the chemicals used on carpets.

"That's one of the few places and one of the few people we are involved with who has an elevated concern for products used on the floor," Sutton says.

The company also services a large private school, with which it partners on an innovative waste management program that involves recycling and composting of organic waste.

Universities are a completely different type of situation from most other types of accounts, Lustig says. They are literally communities unto themselves, and need 24/7 attention.

"It becomes a much more complicated piece of work with a lot of moving parts," he says. "People live there, they're open year-round, you have big sporting events and parents weekends and it's a myriad of different events and activities going on all the time."

It takes a different kind of company commitment to handle educational accounts well, Lustig says.

"You need better management and you have to be willing to invest in the infrastructure and quality programs and training," he says. **CP**



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B. GLASS CLEANER

Baumgartens — The Conserve Glass and Window cleaning tablets are recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a partner in the Design for the Environment Safer Product Labeling program. Ingredients include safer chemistry, meaning no bleach, ammonia or acids used in this product. The product includes a reusable spray bottle and four tablets, making four 32-ounce bottles of cleaner by adding water. FREE INFO: CIRCLE 301

C. FLOOR FINISH

Buckeye International Inc. — Castle-guard is a high solids metal interlock floor finish that is non-yellowing and non-powdering. The finish can be applied to almost all hard floor surfaces, does not require a sealer and resists detergent and water. The product reduces stripping frequencies, is durable and responds to burnishing. FREE INFO: CIRCLE 302

D. FLOOR EQUIPMENT

Tornado Industries — The P Series floor machines are high-output, 1.5 horsepower and 175 rpm and come available in 17- and 20-inch widths. They are engineered with a patented, nonconductive, one-piece rotationally molded body. The machine accepts an optional shampoo tank, and all wires, capacitors and components are enclosed. FREE INFO: CIRCLE 303

E. FINISH MOP

ACS Industries — The Filament Finish Mop is non-absorbent, providing smoother, more even coats of finish. The loop-ends extend the lifespan and allow for greater shine. Mops come in 1 ¼-inch narrow-band and 5-inch wide-band coated mesh. FREE INFO: CIRCLE 304

F. JANITOR CART

Geerpres Inc. — The High-Capacity Cart features powder-coated metal construction and a center divided cabinet, which includes separate locking and non-locking compartments allowing for easy access and maximizes available storage space. The cart offers 8.4 cubic feet of storage and includes 5-inch double bearing swivel casters for maneuverability and front roller bumpers to protect walls, equipment and furnishings. FREE INFO: CIRCLE 305

G. WAND-MOUNTED GROUT BRUSH

Kaivac — The patent-pending Wand-Mounted Mohawk Grout Brush is an optional in-line bristled brush for Touchless Cleaning Systems. The brush is lightweight and is designed for spotting grout lines on the fly while wet vacuuming. Its heavy-duty bristles can reach dirt in grout lines and the vacuum wand serves as a sturdy brush handle. FREE INFO: CIRCLE 306

H. SOAP DISPENSER

Spartan Chemical Co., Inc. — The Bulk Fill Liquid Hand Soap Dispenser has a closed environment with a screw on/off cap and 1,000 milliliter removable reservoir. The site window displays product levels of six optional liquid hand soaps — Antiseptic Hand Cleaner, E2 Hand Wash & Sanitizer, Goin' Home, Lotionized Liquid, PearLux, and Spa Body Shampoo. Dispensers also have a replaceable pump/tank and removable key lock. FREE INFO: CIRCLE 307

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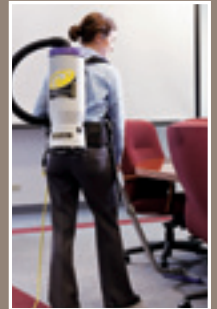
PRODUCT PROFILE

Backpacks Boost Productivity at MMMM

Mitch Murch's Maintenance Management (MMMM) is one of the largest janitorial and related service suppliers in the midwestern and southeastern United States, employing a team of 3,500 to clean more than 100 buildings covering 60 million square feet.

Years ago, in a wide-scale effort to improve productivity and indoor air quality across the board, MMMM switched to Team Cleaning, replacing bag-less uprights with ProTeam backpack vacuums designed for ergonomics and efficiency. Worker productivity improved from 2,500 square feet per hour to over 7,000 square feet per hour — a dramatic 180 percent upswing.

"The increase in productivity has allowed us to take time to address issues that might have previously been pushed to the back burner," says Bill Crouch, MMMM's vice president of training and compliance. "When we finish on time, or even before, we can now go back to the building and follow up on periodic cleaning or special requests." **FREE INFO: CIRCLE 310**



I. FLOOR STRIPPER/FINISH

Procter & Gamble Professional — The ProLine Floor Care System includes a low-odor floor care stripper, a line of floor care finishes and neutral-impact cleaners. The floor finish stripper removes finish with a no-rinse, low-odor and butyl-free formula, leaving floors free of alkalinity. Seven floor finishes feature micropolymer technology that increase durability. The neutral-impact cleaners remove soils that can damage a floor's finish. **FREE INFO: CIRCLE 308**

J. SOFTWARE

OrangeQC — The OrangeQC is a web-based inspection software designed for on-the-go mobile devices (including iPhone and iPad). The software allows companies to track performance online. **FREE INFO: CIRCLE 309**



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Ben Weil

Many customers outsource their facility maintenance needs to Rite Way, allowing them to focus on their own core responsibilities. However, this still requires an open line of communication and we encourage customers to provide feedback as often as they like. One method of customer feedback is requesting that they attend a series of Quarterly Business Review meetings to review their prior 90 days of service. We find these opportunities, and any face-to-face meetings, especially important to relationship building. Following the scope of work is necessary at any facility, but understanding the customer expectations on an ongoing basis requires regular feedback and appropriate, timely responses.

Ben Weil, Marketing Director
Rite Way Service
Birmingham, Ala.

C&D CRYSTAL CLEANING Inc. has always been committed to ensuring that our customers' service expectations are not only met, but are also exceeded. Over the past 19 years, we have been able to successfully uphold this commitment by way of open and honest communication with our customers. In fact, every time we take on a new customer, we first ask them to let us know immediately about any issues which may require correction or adjustment.



Bruce P. Lengyel

Via frequent face-to-face dialogue with our customers, regular telephone conversations, use of technology (i.e.: e-mail, our interactive website), and standard on-site quality control reports, we are able to quickly address our customers' needs. Our management team's approach to customer service relies on these crucial quality control methods; therefore, appropriate follow-up is consistently and routinely maintained for the duration of the business relationship. We believe that we've maintained our strong and loyal customer base because our customers know that their feedback is always appreciated.

Bruce P. Lengyel, Director of Sales
C&D Crystal Cleaning Inc.
Phoenix

WE ENCOURAGE CUSTOMER feedback using surveys. Whether by phone, mail, or in person, we just ask a few questions pertaining to how they perceive our service. We tailor the survey



Jim Ellis

to avoid leading the customer to answer a certain way. What we want to end up with is an honest reflection of how we are meeting their needs and hopefully some suggestions on how we might be able to do a better job.

We respond to the feedback by measuring the results and acting on them. We do this by grading the answers 1-to-5 or 1-to-10 and then using these metrics to measure how strong the responses are, either positive or negative. This method not only finds specific problems, often before they become an official complaint, but also highlights trends that show us areas where we need to work harder and where we are actually excelling.

Jim Ellis, President and
Director of Business Development
Ellis Enterprises
Los Alamitos, Calif.

Next month: How do you motivate your sales team?



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Pete Robinson, Owner, Clean Management, Inc.
(shown with Buckeye Castleguard® and the Clarity Plus Training Program)

*Pictured (from left to right):
Paula Ylst, Account Manager
Pete Robinson, Owner
Juan Rojas, Contractor
Derek Robinson, Owner*



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