

### Testimonial: Mesa School District

By: Rick Michalek, Director of Operations



#### Adapting for the Future with Intellibot

‘Adapt, migrate or perish’ is a saying often heard at schools in Mesa, Arizona. The Charles Darwin quotation, which refers to the three choices facing all the earth’s species, had a special ring as our district prepared to take the leap into the robot era.

My first encounter with an Intellibot cleaning robot was in 2004, when I was Custodial Director. Intellibot did a demo in our warehouse and we were impressed with the potential; however, we had to

defer purchase due to other needs at that time. Intellibot’s second visit was in 2008. We were even more impressed with its advancements and, fortunately, we were in a better position to move forward and purchase our first robot.

#### Staff Freed for Higher Level Tasks

Our main custodial issue at the time was staffing. Declining student enrollment had already necessitated custodial staff reductions that jeopardized our high standards of cleanliness. Intellibot proved to be the answer by lowering our overall cleaning costs while increasing our sanitation levels.

Our concern about job replacement was also proven to be unfounded as we were able to deploy custodial staff to accomplish higher-level tasks.

We’ve found our Intellibot robots to be dedicated employees. We get six hours a night from each robot -- they are on task more since they don’t take breaks. Our robots provide 25 to 30 hours of labor a week, equivalent to one part-time position. It was readily apparent that we could pay for our Intellibot within a few years with just labor savings. We’ve actually had a three-year return on investment. In fact, our ROI would have been realized much sooner if we had used full-time staff instead of our part-time staffing model.

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Our custodial staff was trained in the robot's navigation and programming functions, and personnel were soon using it for actual cleaning duties. We upgraded to the 800 and 850 versions, and we now also have a couple of GenX machines. Most recently we started using the AeroBot and we've ordered another one. Our school district now has a total of 10 Intellibot machines servicing 10 facilities.

The students have shown great interest in the robots since they began arriving. So much so, that they've named the robots at several of the schools. Robot names include Mr. Green Jeans 750, The One and Only Vinnie the Vacuum, and Sidewinder Sam, among others.

### **Increased Productivity, Less Supervision**

We're actually cleaning areas more frequently than in the past. Previously, hallways were only being spot mopped, and there was not enough staff to clean them every night. Cleaning every night protects floor surfaces and increases their useful life. The robots are mostly used to clean large open high-traffic areas with hard surfaces. They are not used in classrooms, as all the obstructions make them too difficult to navigate.

We also have a healthier and safer environment, which is greatly appreciated by teachers, coaches, parents, and students. The custodians really like the robots. The junior high and high schools, for example, have lots of ceramic tile flooring. The high school has 15,000 to 20,000 feet of hallway spread over several buildings. Now those facilities are essentially worry-free for our custodians. Robots don't need supervision and provide consistent quality.

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Reliability is always a key concern with any kind of machinery in daily use. We estimate that the school district has only spent around \$3,000 on maintaining and servicing its Intellibot machines, due to normal wear and tear.

### **A Game Changer**

The service and support offered by Intellibot has made it easy for Mesa's custodial team to adapt to the new technology. Intellibot has always been responsive with resources and training. They're a forward-looking company committed to continuously improving products. They're definitely a game changer, at the cutting edge of the new technology-focused developments in the cleaning industry. In the future, businesses and organizations won't be paying people to slop around mops with dark water, as there are just too many health concerns.