

Results of a study conducted by *Facility Cleaning Decisions* magazine • July 2023



### Methodology

This research report provides insights into how facility cleaning managers in nonresidential buildings manage their cleaning staffs and practices. It provides a comprehensive review of the in-house cleaning department including budgeting, staffing challenges, and employee issues. Additionally, it provides details on management priorities, cleaning priorities, and purchasing priorities.

### Sample

The survey audience was drawn from subscribers to *Facility Cleaning Decisions* magazine (facility cleaning managers in nonresidential buildings). The sample consisted of the following organizations: Educational, Government, Commercial Office, Medical/Healthcare retail, and hospitality.

### Survey

The survey was sent out via e-mail to 15,636 subscribers on March 30, 2023. A follow-up survey reminder was e-mailed to non-respondents on April 5.

### Response

The survey closed for responses on April 14, 2023. 187 questionnaires were returned by the deadline.

### Statistical confidence

The overall estimated margin of error for this study is  $\pm 7.15$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

# 2023 Facility Cleaning Management Study

By James DeGraff, Senior Associate Editor

To say facility cleaning managers have been through a whirlwind of changing expectations and challenges over the past three years is an understatement. Be it shifting preferences from occupants, expiring pandemic-related protocols, or readjusting the way facilities are laid out to better account for new hybrid setups, half the battle is keeping up with the latest trends. From hiring staff to prioritizing facility challenges, keeping up with a perpetually shifting industry is never easy. The primary goal of the “2023 *Facility Cleaning Decisions* Management Survey” is to help guide these important decisions with statistics and trends — done so by asking cleaning managers directly about such topics.

When questioned on their top management priorities for the year ahead, facility cleaning managers pointed towards hiring and retention efforts — with the top two categories being “hiring/maintaining a quality staff” at 55 percent and “increasing staff” at 50 percent. This comes as little surprise as

the current hiring market continues to give employees leverage over the employers who are desperate to fill long-time vacancies.

Other notable results regarding priorities are the number of managers keen on improving their own craft, as 43 percent plan to emphasize more

management training for themselves, a big jump from only 29 percent in 2022. This makes sense from a manager’s perspective, as they believe if they have a better grasp on how to motivate and keep employees happy, those hiring challenges will diminish as well.

Perhaps the most interesting shift is how green cleaning and sustainable initiatives lagged behind other management priorities in 2023. Emphasizing sustainability as a top priority was reported by just 17 percent of facility cleaning managers, down from 33 percent in 2022 when building occupants were more focused on the push for environmental and social improvements.

As it pertains to priorities specific to facility cleaning and management, some notable and surprising shakeups were revealed for 2023. The largest drops included the importance placed on “preventing cross-contamination” which came in at 23 percent (down from 49 percent) and “improving hygiene/health,” totaling 42 percent (down from 56 percent in 2022 when the pandemic was still raging on).

Even though May 2023 marked the end of the Federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, and statistics suggest otherwise, facility cleaning managers still place a premium on healthy facilities. It’s just that other priorities have instead taken charge.





This survey showed a resurgence in “improving facility appearance” — prioritized by only 34 percent of managers in 2022 and a whopping 50 percent of managers this year. This is likely a response to shifting preferences from building occupants and their insistence on seeing the results of cleaning and hygienic practices as they re-enter commercial spaces.

Facility occupant demand is also the likely reason for a second priority jump. Public awareness of virus transmission through the air is most likely the driving factor for facility executives prioritizing “improving indoor air quality”, which rose 10 percentage points since last year to 28 percent. The combination of these rising and falling initiatives speaks more to the growing public awareness of commercial cleaning, as occupants become more critical of public facilities.

The industry is experiencing rapid change, and keeping up with pertinent information has managers branching out. In 2023, there was an interesting shift away from consulting distributors on top trends. While working with distribution partners was still the top source for facility cleaning managers when it came to all categories — including price comparisons/discounts, value-added services and product training or certifications — there was a downward trend in percentage points. The largest drop came from managers turning to distributors for price comparisons or discount information (down from 70 percent in 2022 to 51 percent this year).

Meanwhile, it appears that more managers are turning to the internet as the go-to source for industry information, especially when it comes to product updates and certifications — which

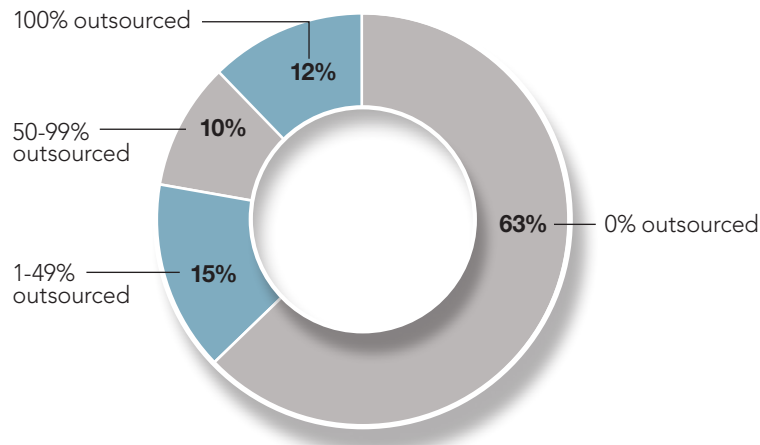
saw a 10-percentage point bump up to 32 percent in total. This doesn’t mean the web will overtake distributors as the top information source anytime soon, but it’s certainly a trend to keep an eye on as technology evolves.

These are just a few of the eye-popping takeaways from the “2023 Facility Cleaning Decisions Management Study”. Check out the graphs below highlighting over 30 questions worth of insights and trends that facility cleaning managers can utilize to better manage and clean the facilities under their umbrella. **FCD**

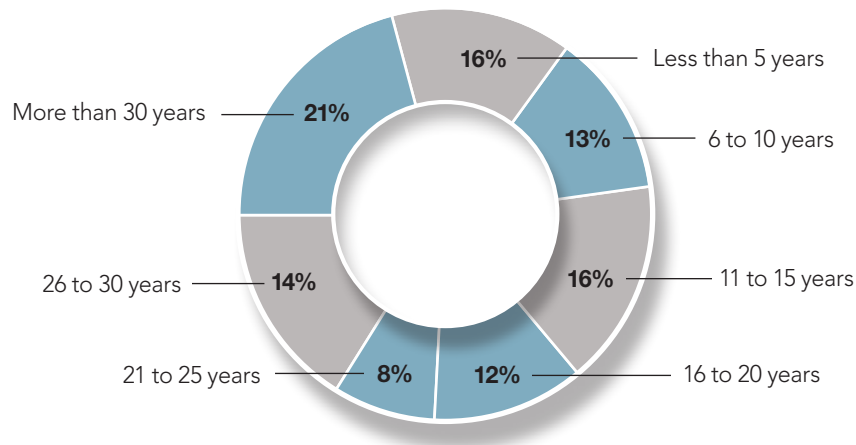
*James DeGraff, senior associate editor, has spent four years creating and overseeing content for Facility Cleaning Decisions, Contracting Profits and Sanitary Maintenance magazines, as well as CleanLink.com.*

# MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

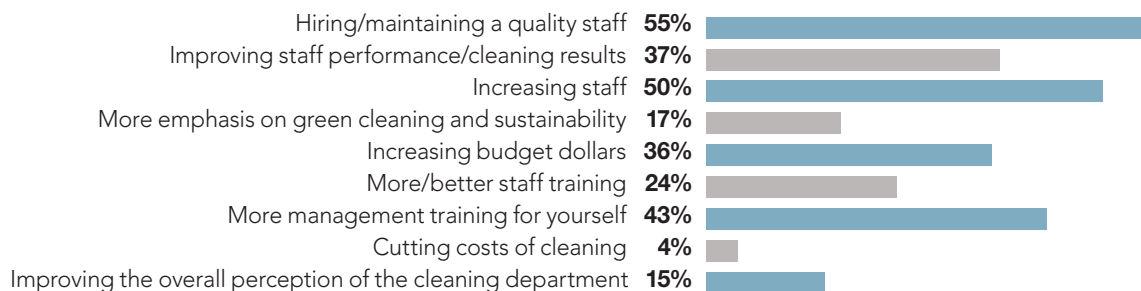
**What percentage of your cleaning operations are outsourced?**



**How many years of experience do you have in facilities/cleaning management?**



**What is the top management priority you plan to emphasize in the next 12 months?**



# MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

Facility cleaning managers oversee an  
average of 34 buildings

Custodial teams are responsible for an average of  
728,224 square feet of cleanable space

The average department consists of  
69 frontline cleaning workers

Do you have a succession plan/program  
in place for your eventual replacement  
and/or that of a manager on your staff?

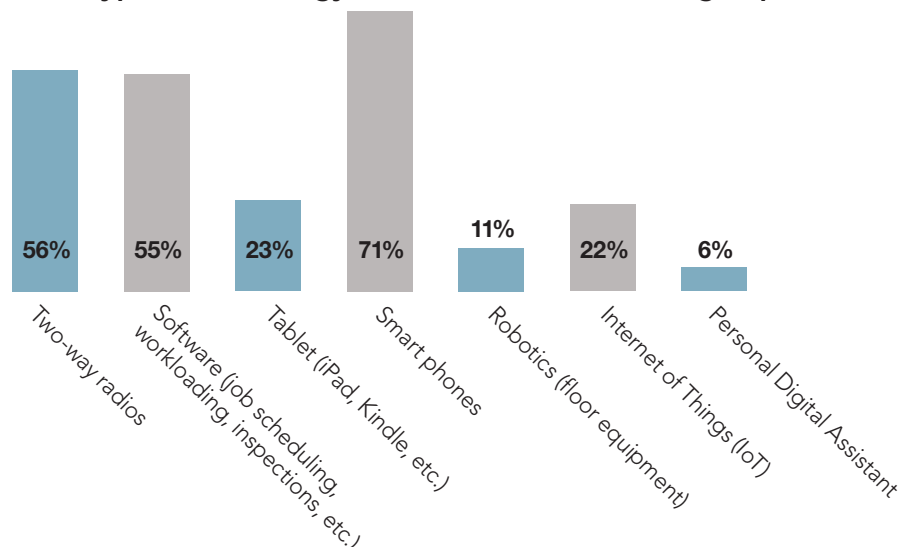


Yes 39%



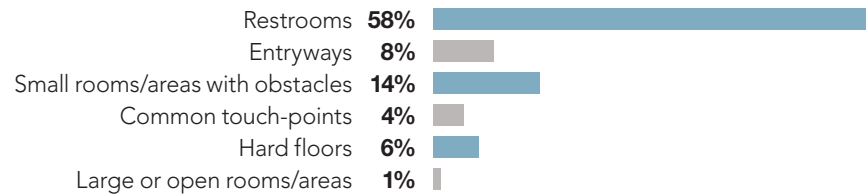
No 61%

What type of technology is used within the cleaning department?



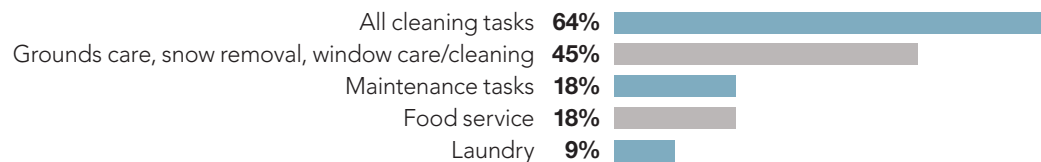
# MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

**What areas within the facility are the most challenging to keep clean?**

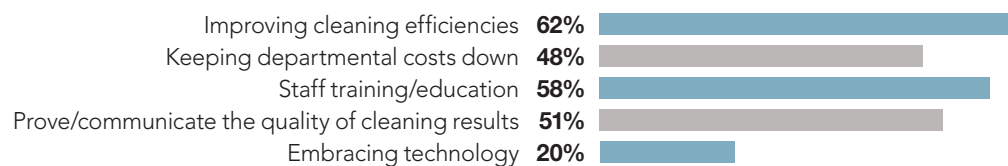


**91% of cleaning executives**  
feel safe from any outsourcing threat

**In what areas has your department been threatened by outsourcing?**



**How have you kept the threat of outsourcing at bay?**

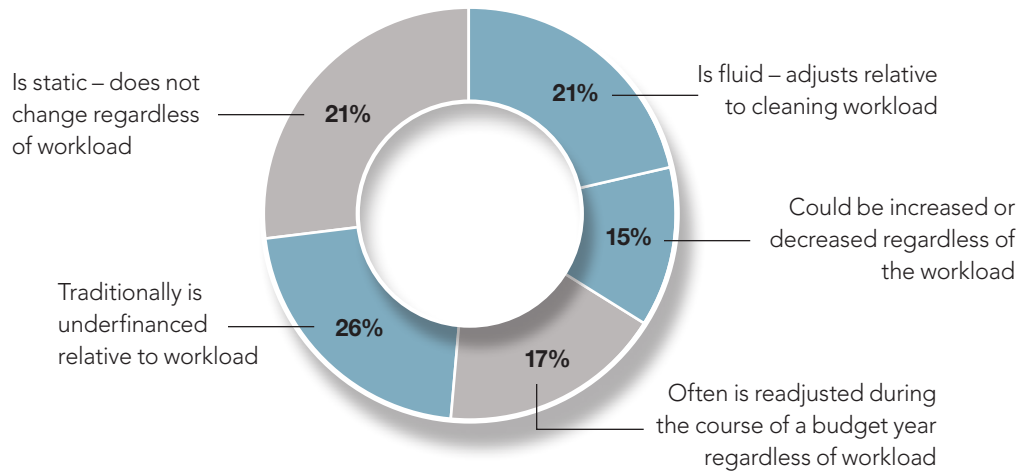


**What are the most important cleaning priorities within your facility?**



## DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS

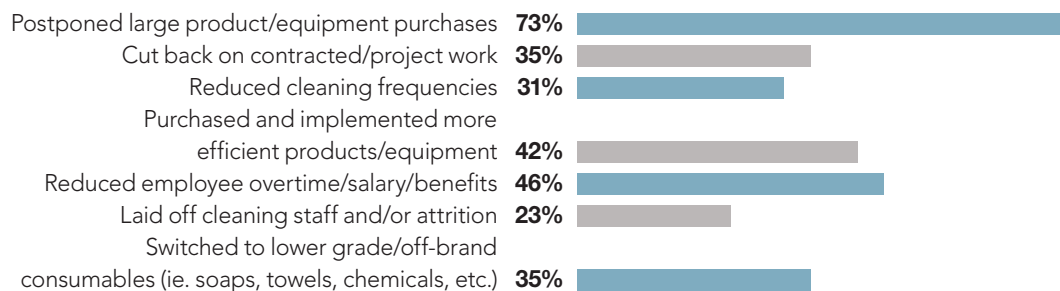
### Which statement best describes your operations budget?



**74% of departments were protected**  
from budget cuts in the last 12 months

The average annual budget for  
cleaning products and equipment was \$347,659

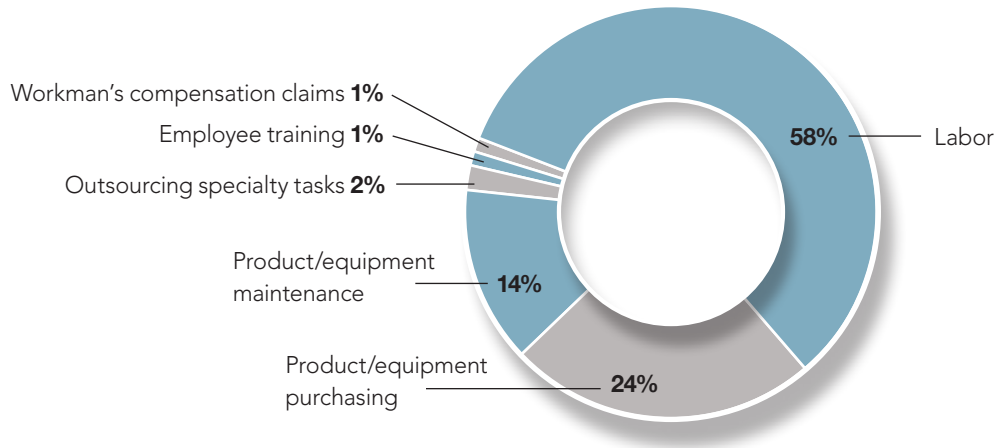
### What adjustments did you make in your program to comply with the lower budget?





# DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS

Where do you spend most of your budget dollars?



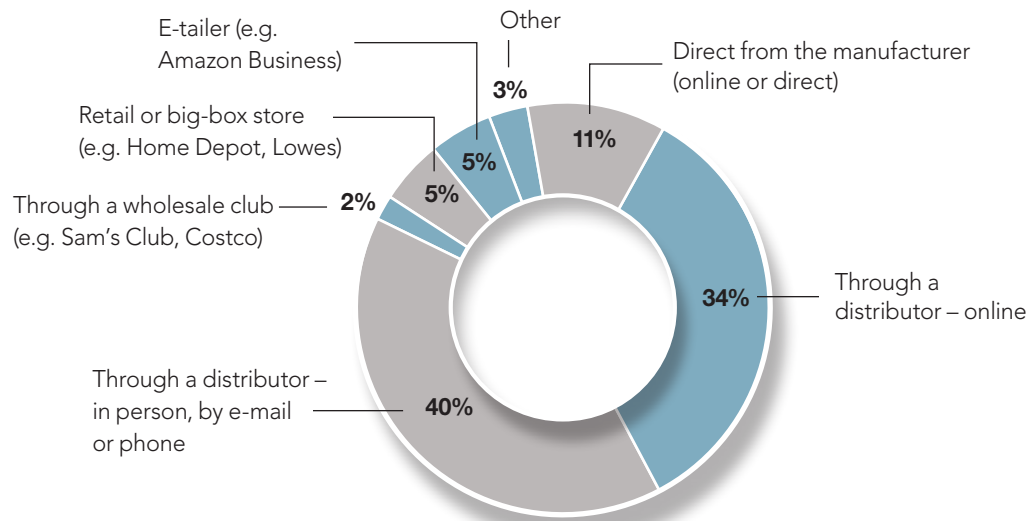
With respect to your department, do you expect the following to increase, decrease or stay the same in the next 12 months?

Staffing levels	▲ 20%	▼ 10%	SAME 70%	NA 0%
Departmental budgets	▲ 22%	▼ 18%	SAME 60%	NA 0%
Sustainable initiatives	▲ 13%	▼ 4%	SAME 72%	NA 11%
Training opportunities	▲ 35%	▼ 5%	SAME 58%	NA 2%
Product purchasing (chemicals, hand tools, soaps, etc.)	▲ 24%	▼ 12%	SAME 62%	NA 2%
Equipment purchasing (floor/carpet machines, vacuums, etc.)	▲ 25%	▼ 24%	SAME 50%	NA 1%
Total square footage cleaned	▲ 27%	▼ 3%	SAME 68%	NA 2%
Green cleaning/sustainable product usage	▲ 18%	▼ 1%	SAME 64%	NA 17%
Threat of outsourcing your cleaning department	▲ 9%	▼ 5%	SAME 38%	NA 48%
Travel to industry events/conferences	▲ 14%	▼ 8%	SAME 49%	NA 29%

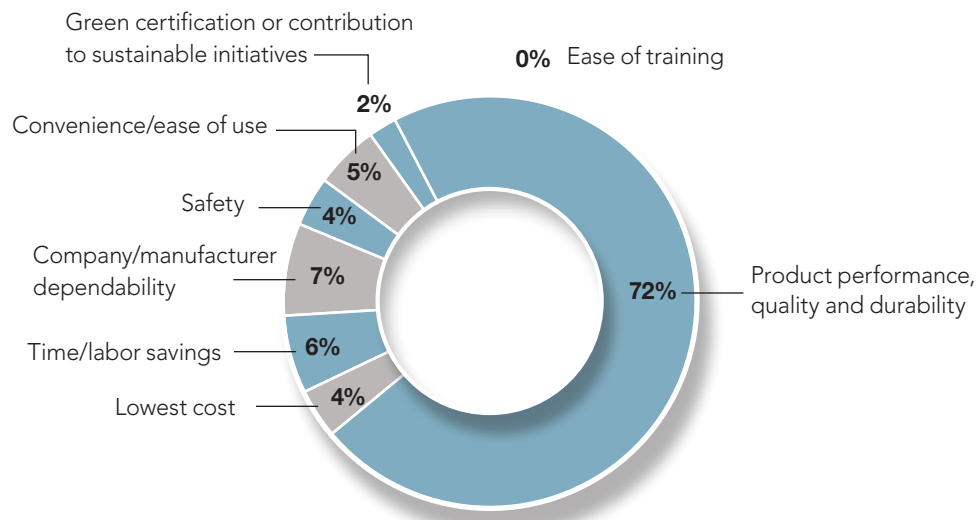
## PURCHASING PRIORITIES

**97% of *Facility Cleaning Decisions* readers are involved in recommending, specifying and/or purchasing cleaning supplies and equipment used in their facility**

**What percentage of your cleaning products and equipment are purchased through the following sources?**

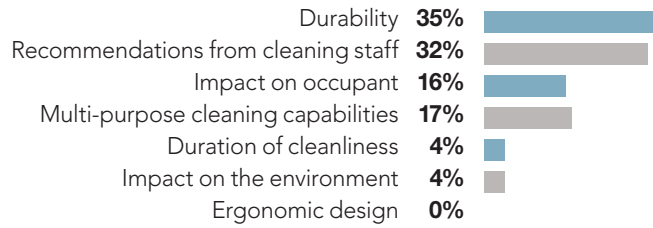


**What is most important to you when purchasing products/equipment?**

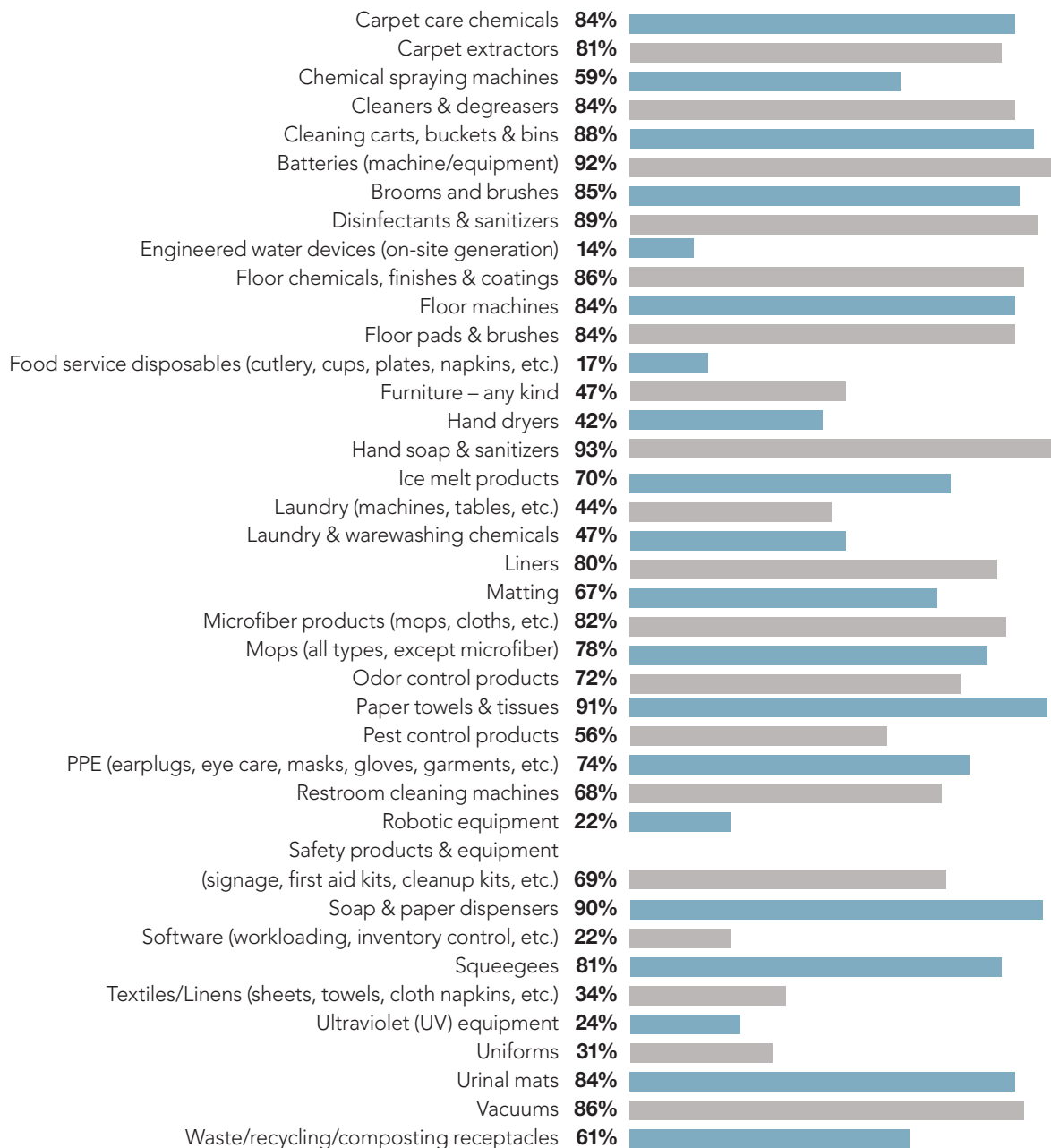


# PURCHASING PRIORITIES

**What priorities are most important when considering new products for purchase?**



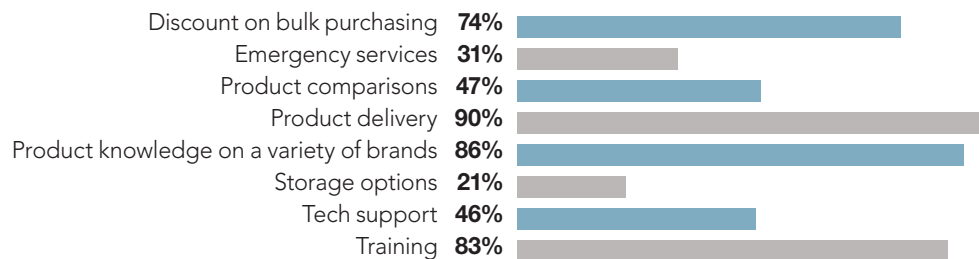
**Which of the following products are you responsible for recommending, specifying or purchasing?**



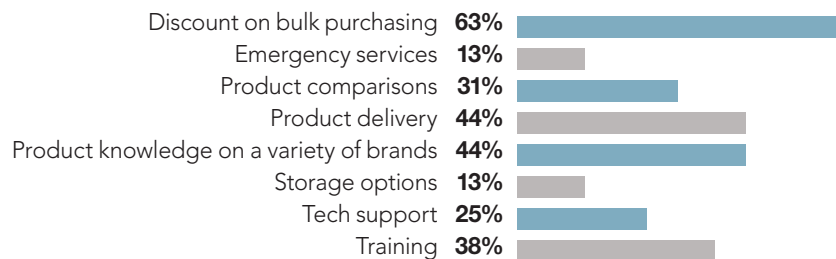
# PURCHASING PRIORITIES

**73% of managers receive value-added services**  
from their distributor partner

## What services do you receive from your distributor?



## What value-added services would you like to get from your distributor?

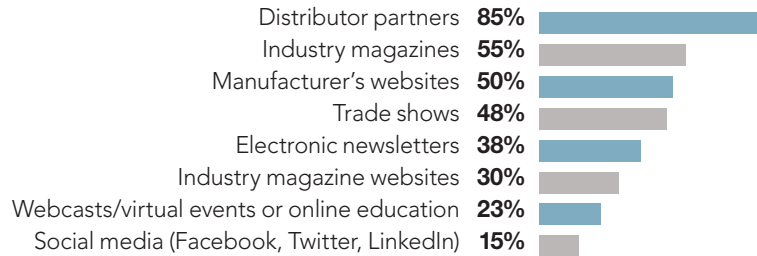


## What information do you receive from your distributor, manufacturer, retailer/big-box store or the internet?

	Distributor	Manufacturer	Retailer/ Big-box Store	Internet
Best price comparisons and/or product discount	51%	17%	7%	53%
Best value-added services when purchasing	70%	15%	5%	29%
Safety Data Sheets (SDS)	58%	48%	0%	41%
Product availability after-hours or in case of emergencies	71%	10%	15%	25%
Product training	76%	35%	0%	24%
Product certifications and updates	68%	38%	0%	32%

## PURCHASING PRIORITIES

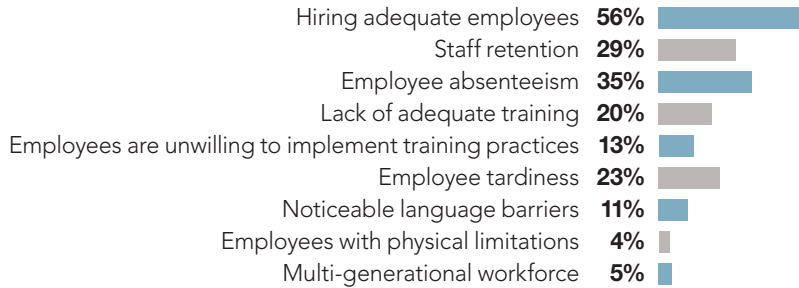
**What sources do you use to learn about products for potential purchase?**



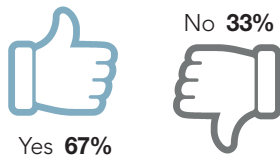


# STAFFING CHALLENGES

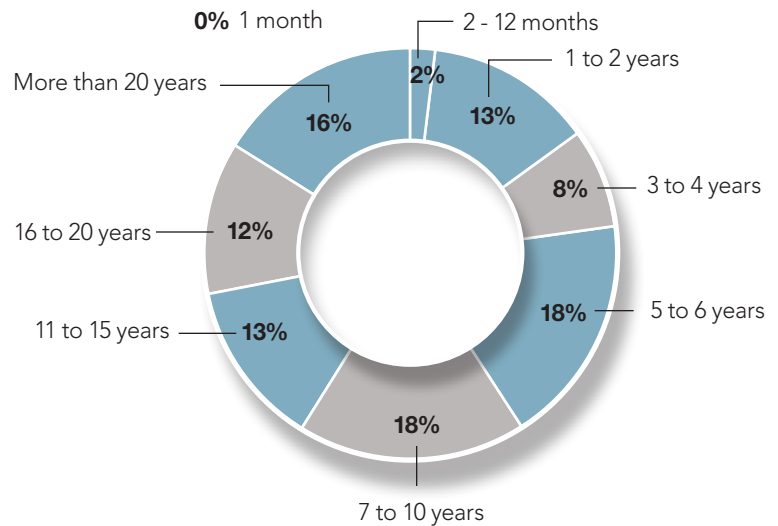
## Which employee issues have the biggest impact on your cleaning department?



## Do you support employee certification/accreditation or offer advancement opportunities to your cleaning employees?



## On average, how long does the typical janitor stay with your company?



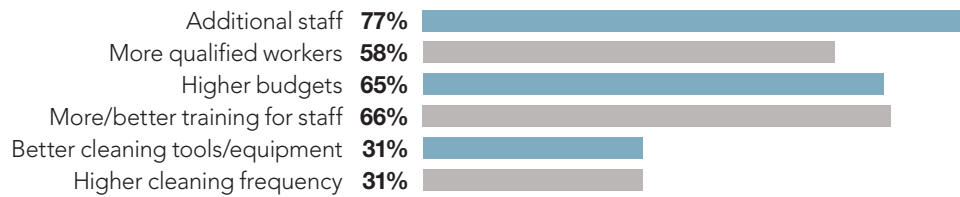
## What opportunities do you offer, for example?

- Leadership roles
- Tuition reimbursement
- Training, including seminars and workshops
- 401K and vacation
- Incremental pay

## STAFFING CHALLENGES

**69% of managers** believe their department is adequately staffed to complete the cleaning needs within the facility

**What additions to your department would help guarantee the facility is properly cleaned?**



**Do you plan to add staff to the department in the next 12 months?**



Yes **43%**



No **57%**

**What is the reason for needing additional staff?**

