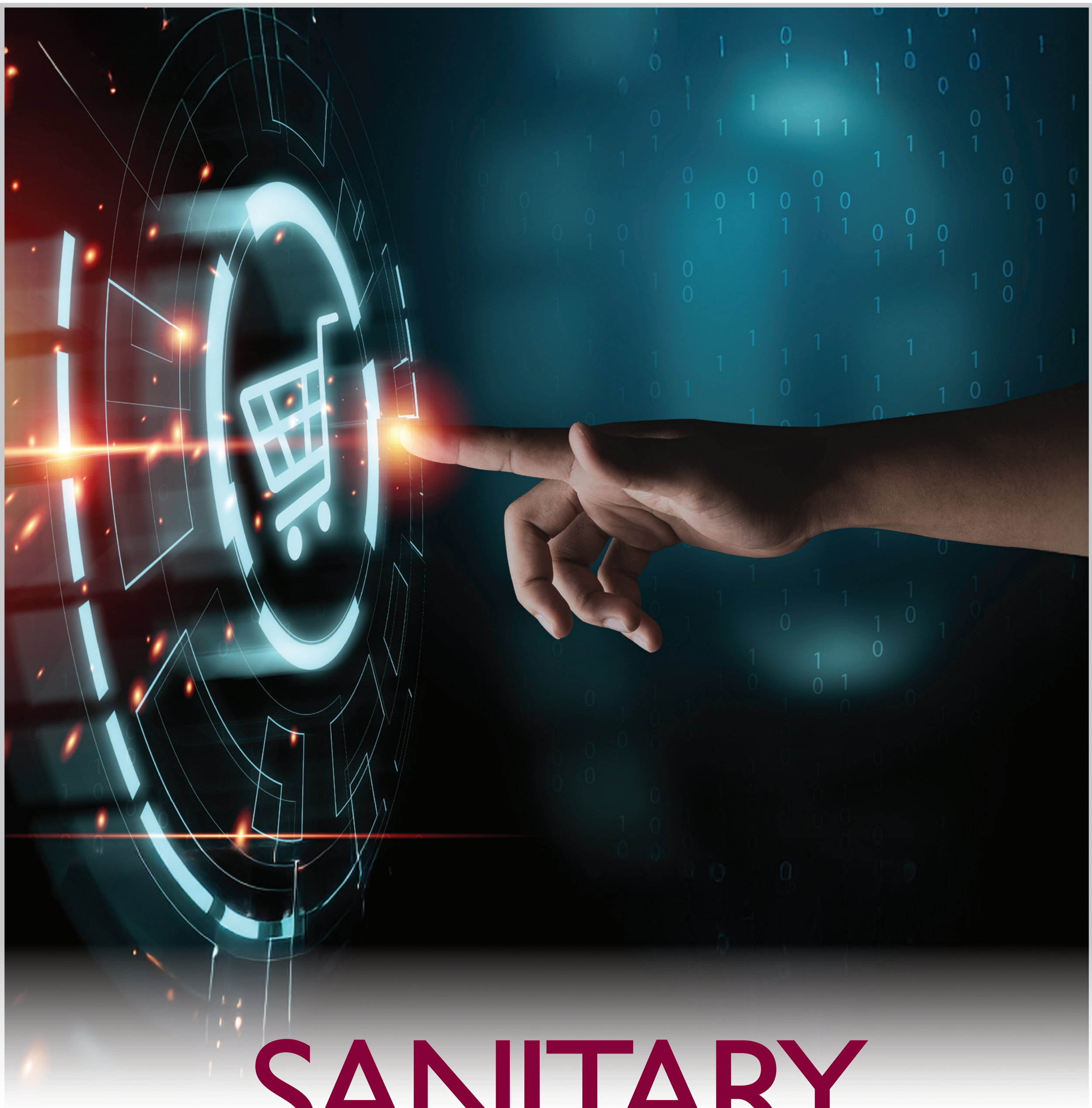
2025 END USER PURCHASING TRENDS SURVEY



SANITARY
MAINTENANCE

Results of a study conducted by *Sanitary Maintenance* magazine • October 2025

PURCHASING POWER

Study outlines what end users look from when buying products and equipment

By Jake Meister, Managing Editor

A jan/san distributor's job is not easy. Just to survive, they must achieve strong sales and maintain a good relationship with customers. To thrive, though? That requires much more skill and hard work. The best jan/san distributors are closely dialed into the commercial cleaning industry. Not only do they know what the customer needs, but they know why these needs exist. Successful jan/san distributors realize that each customer is its own delicate ecosystem, highly dependent on many things going right. In some ways, a jan/san distributor must know their customer needs better than the customer knows itself.

Sanitary Maintenance—aware that jan/san distributors have a thorough understanding of how in-house facility managers and building services contractors function—polled these end user professionals on a variety of topics for the "2025 End User Purchasing Survey." The resulting findings can help distributors concentrate more on sales opportunities and less on pitches their customers don't want to hear.

This year's survey revealed that there is untapped potential for online sales revenue. For starters, 58 percent of respondents say they would purchase more products online from distributors if they had greater e-commerce capabilities. This represents a shift from the most recent survey—administered in 2023—where just under half of respondents said they would buy more had their distributors improved their e-commerce game.

Even more conclusive was the end user's response when asked if they would buy non-cleaning products from their distributor if they were offered. Over three-quarters of those surveyed say "yes," suggesting that it's time for distributors to bulk up their offerings on popular items such as breakroom necessities, coffee and creamer, batteries, and other office supplies.

End users were also asked about the percentage of their cleaning products they buy online, but not from a traditional distributor—think e-tailers such as Amazon Business. Almost a third of respondents say they buy less than 5 percent of cleaning products online from a non-jan/san distributor, making it the most popular option. However, 14.5 percent say they buy between 11 and 25 percent of cleaning products through an online e-tailer, and another 11 percent say they buy 26 to 50 percent of their products through these sources.

Results like this further demonstrate that there is an existing and prospering market for selling cleaning products online. Distributors that have been hesitant to make the switch may want to reconsider their position.

For instance, if the previous support of online tools wasn't enough, the survey also asked respondents what percentage of the products they purchased from a traditional distributor were done using e-commerce. A combined 42 percent of end users say they purchase at least 51 percent of their products via their distributor's website.

Distributors who have been slow to adopt e-commerce on their websites won't be left out to dry. Nearly a third of the survey respondents say less than 10 percent of the products they purchase from their distributor are purchased online. So, while technology continues to be a significant component of modern business, there is still a market for selling to customers who prefer more traditional methods.

These distributors aren't the only businesses slow to adopt technology. End users surveyed are slow to embrace technology, even if it promotes efficiencies.

Over the next 12 months, just 20 percent of respondents say they plan to splurge on robotic floor care equipment. This is a slow growth—but growth, nonetheless—from the 13 percent who responded "yes" to the question in 2023. Much of the hesitation stems from pricing and rapid changes in the technology. It remains to be seen whether purchases will increase as equipment features evolve and prices level out to become more palatable for budgets.

That said, end users are much more interested in products and technology that leverage Internet of Things (IoT) capabilities. Just over half of respondents say they plan to buy products that leverage the technology in the next 12 months, up slightly from the 2023 survey where 48.5 percent of respondents added IoT to their shopping carts.

While the survey had specific questions related to IoT and robotic floor equipment purchases, it also presented a list of almost three dozen product categories that end users were considering buying in the next 12 months. In comparing the results of the 2023 survey to those of this year's survey, there are a few notable differences.

Nearly half of the end users surveyed in 2023 said they planned to buy a new cleaning cart, compared to just over a quarter of respondents in 2025. Also, foodservice disposables were far more in demand in 2023 than they are now.

Surprisingly, interest in buying electrostatic equipment doubled over the last two years, but that isn't saying much. Just 7 percent of the people surveyed this year say they might invest in technology.

Most notably, interest in floor care chemicals more than doubled over the last two years. Sixty-four percent of end users say they plan to buy these products, compared to just 27 percent in 2023.

When end users do decide to begin shopping around for different products, they clearly value some factors more than others. Just as in 2023, ease-of-use is the most valuable component in a product or piece of equipment. The next most important factors were, in order, productivity/increased time or labor savings, ease of training others to use, product durability, and manufacturer dependability/reputation.

Interestingly, a low price—always expected to be a driving factor in purchasing—ranked very low among survey respondents. End users chose this as the second least important factor when choosing products and equipment for purchase.

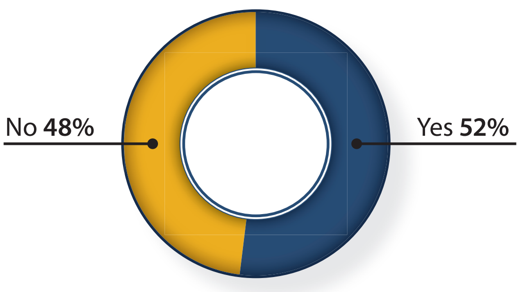
Despite how end users responded to the last question, another suggests they do care about the bottom line. An overwhelming 83 percent of participants claim they would switch distributors for a better product price. The good news is, many end users consider value-added services as part of a purchase, so distributors who excel in this area might still compete with bargain shops.

While current events can feel prevalent in much of the public's daily life, they do not have much impact on end users purchasing habits. When asked about how current events will influence their purchasing decisions, 48 percent of end users say they will purchase at a normal frequency but will be open to different brands to satisfy their needs. A third of respondents say they will buy as normal. Just 5 percent of respondents say they are postponing purchases.

Overall, end users do have an appetite to buy even more from their distributors, but this might require distributors to make some big changes. Whether or not they desire to take on the challenge is up to them. **SM**

2025 SALES COMPENSATION SURVEY

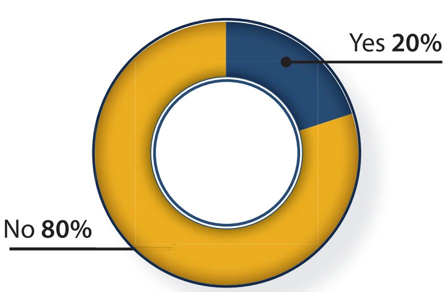
Do you plan on purchasing or researching Internet of Things products/technology in the next 12 months?



Rank the following factors that you consider when purchasing products/equipment, from most important to least important

1. Ease of use
2. Productivity/increased time or labor savings
3. Ease of training others to use
4. Product durability
5. Manufacturer dependability/reputation
6. A low price
7. Contribution to green/sustainable initiatives

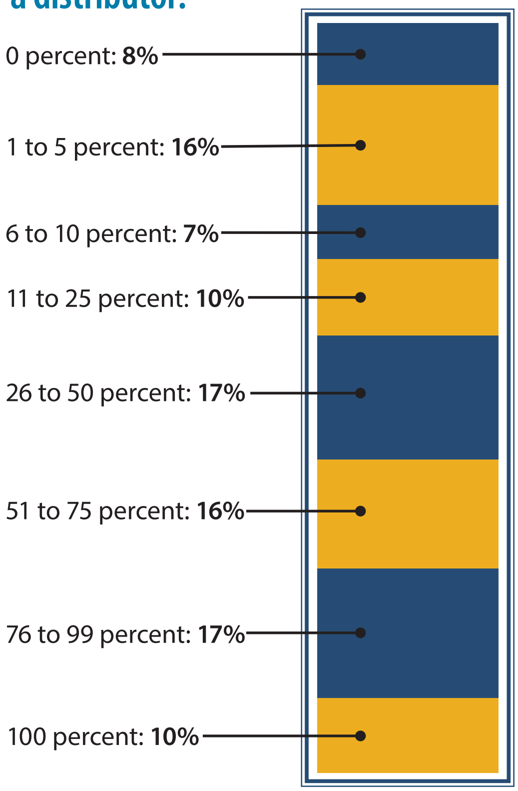
Do you plan on purchasing or researching robotic floor equipment in the next 12 months?



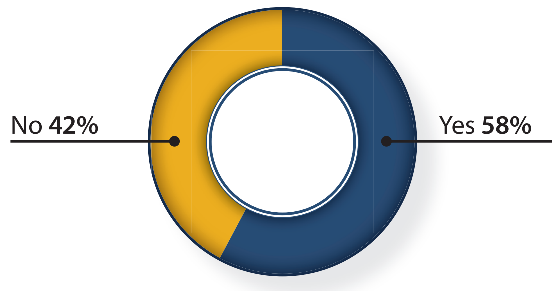
What products/equipment do you plan on purchasing in the next 12 months?

Batteries (floor equipment, vacuums)	48%
Brooms and Brushes	61%
Can Liners	75%
Carpet Care Chemicals	53%
Carpet Extractors	24%
Cleaners and Degreasers	71%
Cleaning Carts	27%
Disinfectants and Sanitizers	76%
Electrostatic Equipment	6%
Engineered Water Devices	6%
Floor Care Chemicals	64%
Floor Equipment	42%
Floor Pads and Brushes	57%
Foodservice Disposables	6%
Hand Dryers	9%
Hand Sanitizers	42%
Hand Soap	69%
Ice Melt Products	31%
Laundry Products (soaps, machines, tables)	32%
Matting	17%
Microfiber Cloths	60%
Mops and Mopping Equipment	63%
Odor Control Products	41%
Paper Towels and Tissues	75%
Personal Protective Equipment	55%
Pest Control Products	18%
Restroom Cleaning Machines	18%
Safety Supplies (signage, floor cones, first aid kits)	42%
Soap and Paper Dispensers	43%
Software (bidding and estimating, inspection, timekeeping, etc.)	7%
Squeegees	38%
Vacuums	55%
Waste Handling Equipment (receptacles/carts, not liners)	24%
Wet Wipes	29%

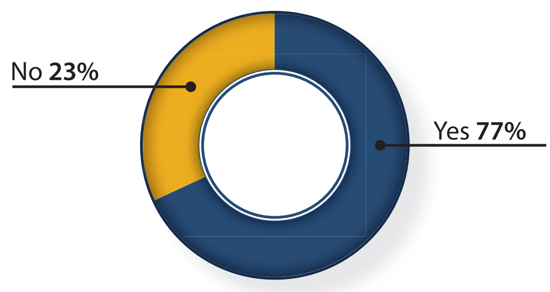
What percentage of products (based on sales) do you purchase online from a distributor?



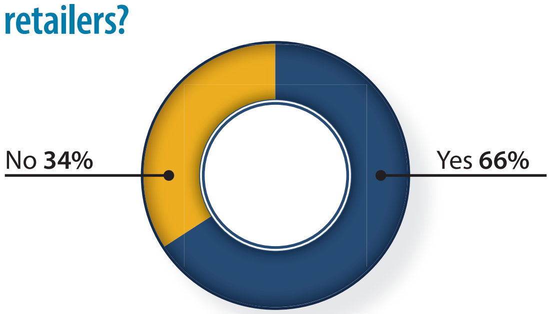
Would you purchase more products online if your distributor had better e-commerce abilities?



Would you purchase these non-cleaning products from your distributor if they were offered?



Do you purchase non-cleaning products (for example, office supplies, breakroom supplies, etc.) from online retailers?



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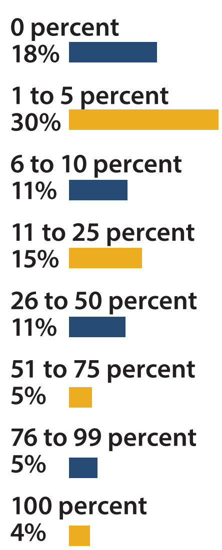
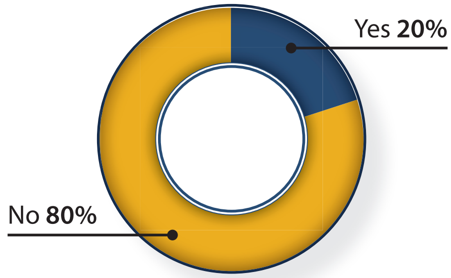
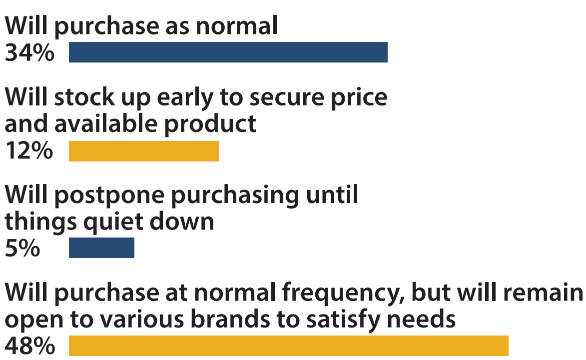


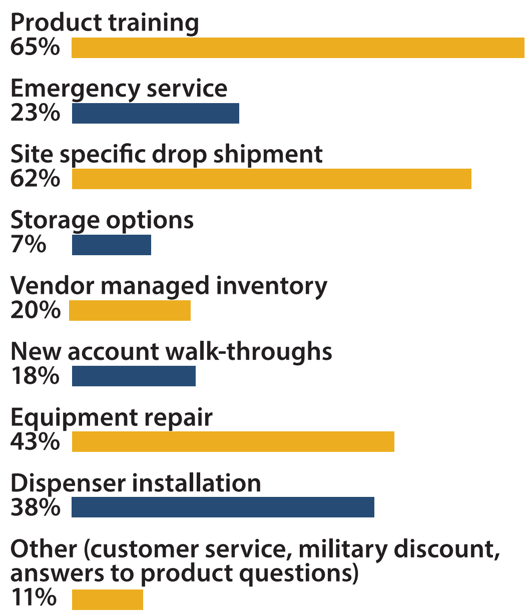
Do you plan on purchasing or researching robotic floor equipment in the next 12 months?



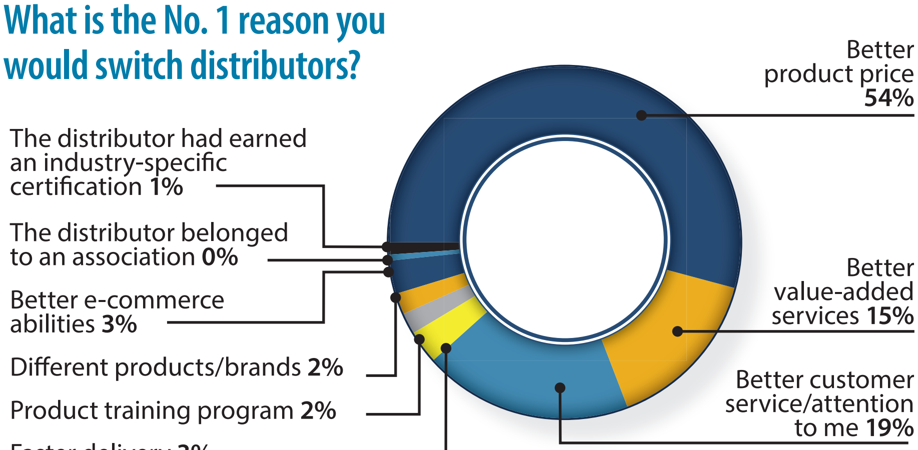
How will current events (such as product availability, price fluctuations, etc.) influence your purchasing decisions?



What free, value-added services does your distributor offer?



What is the No. 1 reason you would switch distributors?



What services would you be willing to pay for?

Dispenser installation
13%

Emergency service
27%

Equipment repair
65%

New account walk-throughs
5%

Product training
27%

Site specific drop shipment
12%

Storage options
11%

Vendor managed inventory
17%

Other (None, or when services are less expensive than in-house)
7%

What would cause you to switch distributors?

Better e-commerce abilities
23%

Better product price
83%

Better value-added services
56%

Better customer service/ attention to me
54%

Different products/brands
28%

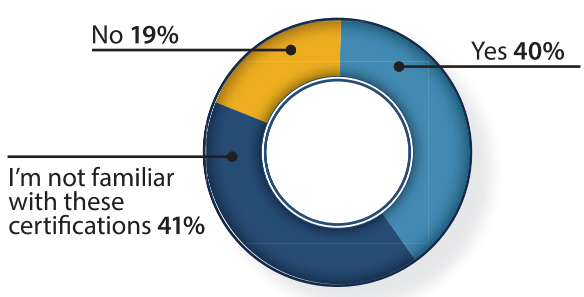
Faster delivery
37%

Product training program
28%

The distributor belonged to an association
6%

The distributor had earned an industry-specific certification
10%

Are you more willing to work with a certified distributor (for example BSCAI's RBSP or ISSA's CIMS ICE certifications)?



SANITARY MAINTENANCE

Methodology

This research report provides new data on the purchasing habits of cleaning products, supplies, and equipment by building service contractors and in-house facility cleaning managers. It also looks at ancillary factors that influence product purchases and online product purchasing trends, as well as the reasons why end users switch distributors.

Sample

The survey participant pool consists of U.S. subscribers to *Contracting Profits* magazine (building service contractors/professional cleaning contractor executives) and *Facility Cleaning Decisions* magazine (facility cleaning managers in nonresidential buildings).

Survey

The survey was sent out via email to 41,040 subscribers on June 2, 2025.
Follow-up survey reminders were emailed to non-respondents.

Response

The survey closed for responses on June 16, 2025. Two hundred ninety-two questionnaires were returned by the deadline.

Statistical confidence

The overall estimated margin of error for this study is ±5.71 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

About Us

Sanitary Maintenance has been serving the information needs of jan/san distributors since 1943. Today we reach more than 13,000 owners and executives responsible for the operations of distributorships throughout the United States. The magazine provides case studies and information on successfully managing a distributorship. In addition, it showcases the latest products, provides news on sales trends, industry mergers, personnel announcements and more. This content and much more are also featured on its website, CleanLink.com.