



CERTIFICATION CASE STUDY



COMPANY:

Bee-Clean Building Maintenance

HEADQUARTERS:

Edmonton, AB, Canada

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:

6,000+

SERVICE AREA:

23 branch offices throughout Canada

SERVICE MARKETS:

Education, healthcare, commercial, real estate, industrial and government facilities, as well as public venues

CIMS Assessment Leads to Pleasant Surprise Regarding Existing Level of Excellence

As the largest Canadian owned contract cleaning company, Bee-Clean Building Maintenance is proud to clean more than 150 million square feet across the country on a daily basis. Its numerous branch offices supported by over 6,000 employees serve a wide variety of clients, including office tower properties, healthcare facilities, shopping malls, entertainment venues, educational institutions and hospitality facilities. In recent years, Bee-Clean has also expanded its offerings to include cleaning supplies, minor maintenance and machine repairs.

Bee-Clean's business is based on a corporate philosophy that service, quality and value represent the keys to success. That's why it made sense to Mark Andrews, Bee-Clean's vice president, to investigate the new ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) and consider applying for CIMS certification. CIMS is a comprehensive management and operations standard of excellence designed by ISSA to help building service contractors and in-house service providers develop quality, customer-centered organizations. "I heard about CIMS, downloaded the CIMS material from the ISSA website and became convinced the certification would be a positive move," says Andrews.

But he was initially concerned that the process of becoming certified would prove too difficult. "I knew it would require agreement and cooperation among many players in the company in order to successfully gather, compile and submit all the necessary materials and then undergo the comprehensive on-site assessment," he explains.

Andrews was also concerned that other Bee-Clean executives would be skeptical about the cost and country wide resources needed for the process. So the first step was to discuss the potential value of CIMS and the possibilities that certification offered with other senior regional and national executives. It turned out it really wasn't a difficult sell. After all, the idea of complying with an industry-wide standard of excellence fit perfectly with Bee-Clean's business philosophy.

After receiving national executive support, Andrews established work groups that would be responsible for compiling all of the information necessary to become certified. ISSA provides companies with a CIMS self-assessment checklist designed to guide organizations through the investigation, compilation and information-gathering process necessary for certification.

The checklist runs through the five cornerstone quality management principles, breaking them down into measurable policies, procedures and outcomes. For example, under the Service Delivery section, checklist items include service delivery plans, workloading, budgeting, work instructions, contingency planning and others. Companies wishing to be certified must have written policies, procedures and plans corresponding to all of the checklist items and must demonstrate that such policies, procedures and plans are implemented in the field by undergoing an comprehensive assessment of their operations.

When a company is ready for its assessment, the assessor uses the same checklist to ensure that all requirements have been complied with and the company is eligible for certification.

Bee-Clean's work groups simply went through the checklist, making sure the necessary information was available. That process required a close examination of the policies and procedures Bee-Clean uses on a daily basis to make sure they adhered to the Standard — and that's what appealed the most to Andrews.

“ The CIMS standard is good for the cleaning industry as a whole and the ISSA is in a great position to provide the leadership. The certification process was well-presented, clear, and easy to follow. The ISSA made it easy for us. We are proud to be a part of it. ”

– John Appleton,
Regional Manager,
Bee-Clean, British Columbia

BEST TIP FOR COMPANIES THINKING ABOUT CERTIFICATION:

Use a PDF format when compiling documentation. Bee-Clean's existing documents were in a variety of formats, from Microsoft Word to Appleworks. Instead of having to re-do all of those documents in a single format, Bee-Clean's regional manager, John Appleton, saved them all as PDFs.

"I love investigating and looking at how things are working," says Andrews. "I knew this process would involve a wide range of discovery that would prove or disprove the validity and effectiveness of our company's policies and procedures. I was looking forward to what we'd find."

John Appleton, regional manager for Bee-Clean British Columbia, was intimately involved in gathering the documentation. Appleton is responsible for writing the company's policies and procedures, so he knew that much of what ISSA required for certification was already in place.

One of the biggest surprises for Appleton was finding out how far his company had already come on the road toward meeting the CIMS standard. "When I first heard about this, I thought it was going to be a lot of work to create all of those documents, but it wasn't," he says. "We had most of it already and what we had was in keeping with the standard."

Andrews agrees. "This proved to me that we weren't alone in thinking the standards we had already adopted internally for health and safety and management, along with all the rest of our policies and procedures, were the best practices we could have implemented."

He also believes that the actual assessment process was thorough and satisfying. "The assessor realized we took this very seriously and that the spirit of the standards was firmly in place," he explains, noting the assessor visited several Bee-Clean client sites at random from a long list put together by Andrews.

"Our clients were happy to participate in this," Andrews says. "It was good for them to know that an independent third party was certifying us to a standard of excellence."

Appleton notes that the assessment process confirmed what he always knew about Bee-Clean. "We knew we were doing a good job, but it was gratifying to have an outside source confirm it. That was invaluable to us."

Linda Piasentin, site manager for Bee-Clean's operations in Capital Health's Alberta Hospital Edmonton, gathered much of the information dealing with on-site policies and procedures in regard to environmental safety.

Piasentin was gratified to discover the excellence that already existed within Bee-Clean as a whole. "I'm a site manager, so I deal with my own world on a day-to-day basis, but this gave me an opportunity to see a companywide view," she says. "It was neat to see that we all have our own ways of doing things specific to the requirements of different sites and clients, but we are all going in the same direction and very much on the same page."

Andrews, Appleton and Piasentin all truly believe that the process was highly beneficial and that achieving certification will have tremendous value going forward. "There are so many benefits to this in terms of ensuring operational and systemic excellence, but there are also immeasurable benefits, specifically the pride that comes from knowing you're working for a well-run company," says Andrews.

Piasentin agrees. "This has cemented the fact that we are a quality company and it makes me feel proud of who I work for and what I do. I was already proud, but this really took it up a notch."

ABOUT CIMS:

CIMS is the first comprehensive management and operations standard for cleaning organizations. Administered by ISSA and the American Institute for Cleaning Sciences, CIMS is a standard of excellence designed to help building service contractors and in-house service providers develop quality, customer-centered organizations.

The CIMS framework is built around five quality principles that have proven to be the hallmarks of well-managed, successful cleaning operations:

- Quality Systems
- Human Resources
- Management Commitment
- Service Delivery
- Health, Safety & Environmental Stewardship

Why should a company certify to CIMS? Daniel Wagner, director of facility service programs for ISSA, explains: "Implementation of the standard's elements affords an organization a tremendous opportunity to validate its management systems and processes. Professional, customer-centered cleaning organizations finally have a touchstone resource, a common rallying point around which all members of the industry can gather and work toward achieving an unprecedented level of professionalism and excellence."



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