By MICHAEL SAWCHUK

By now, we have probably all heard someone say, “After COVID-19, the professional cleaning industry will never be the same.” This is an understatement. The entire way we do business, the ways we work with our customers, what our customers will expect from us, and what we expect of ourselves are all going to be changed and redefined.

However, before we address all these changes, we should examine some issues that are likely to confront many in our industry. We might as well start with the bad news first.

Although for some manufacturers, especially those making disinfectants and disinfectant systems, business is booming, just as it is for many distributors. However, for those companies in the third leg of our industry – the building service contractors (BSCs) – some are dealing with significant and tough challenges. For example, in Silicon Valley, one of the largest contractors in the area that services the new Apple headquarters had to lay-off 300 workers servicing this one facility. The building is closed and, making matters worse, at least this time, Apple has no date set for re-opening.

The same thing is happening all over North America. With facilities shuttered and many organizations struggling...
Building Service Contractors in a Post-COVID-19 World

financially, administrators are making cuts wherever they can. Cutting cleaning is easy. Not only is it not needed if the building is closed, but for many facility managers, cleaning their buildings is one of their most significant expenses.

However, it is not going to stop there. Picture our industry as a three-legged stool. If one leg is weak or comes apart, the stool will collapse. Here is how this could happen.

Let’s say our Apple cleaning contractor, along with several other cleaning contractors, are now having difficulty paying their distributors. Thirty, 60, 90 days go by with no payments. Now the distributor is having cash flow issues and can’t pay manufacturers. The BSC leg weakens, then the distributor’s leg weakens, and inevitably, this causes the leg holding up jansan manufacturers to weaken as well.

If this happens, how fast it happens, and to what extent, are still unknowns. However, we would be foolish not to think this is a possibility that could impact our entire industry.

With the bad news out of the way, for those BSCs who managed through this challenging period, we can expect several opportunities to open up. But to take advantage of them will require BSCs to redefine their businesses, and make some significant changes in the ways they operate them. Business as usual is now out the window.

Some of the changes BSCs will likely need to make or address in a post-COVID world include the following:

Rebranding

BSCs will need to rebrand themselves. They are no longer offering “janitorial services.” Their staff are no longer “cleaning workers.” Instead, BSCs in a post-COVID world are “infection prevention services” and their staff are “healthy cleaning and disinfection technicians.” BSCs will need to start working these types of terms and creating these types of images into their janitorial proposals, but even more critical, walk the talk, as we will explore in more detail.

Training Requirements

For many BSCs, being certified by one of ISSA’s “best practices” training programs such as CIMS or CMI* have often been used not only as a learning tool but as a marketing tool as well. It verifies the contractor’s staff has been trained in the most effective and cost-effective ways to perform cleaning tasks. Managers like to see this. Going forward, however, it will no longer be a marketing tool; it will be a requirement. Just as many BSCs must verify they have the necessary insurance credentials to be considered for hiring, building managers will look for certifications as a prerequisite for bidding on their facility’s cleaning needs.

Being Part of a Team

Building managers are going to evaluate cleaning contractors much more thoroughly in a post-COVID world. Among other things, they will want to know whether they have strong relationships with distributors. Why? They will want to hire more than a cleaning contractor; they want to hire a team. This means the contractor will need an astute distributor on the team as a back-up resource they can turn to, especially when an emergency like this happens again.

Further, expect managers to downsize when it comes to the number of vendors they work with. If they hire a contractor teamed up with a distributor, that allows them to work fewer vendors. This will make it easier for managers to conduct business and helps them move faster to address an array of cleaning challenges, including emergencies, as we are now experiencing.

End of the Low Bidder

Many BSCs will be happy to hear that building managers will no longer hire a contractor just because they are the low bidder. Most managers have already learned that hiring low bidders can lead to problems. But, in a post-COVID world, hiring a low bidder could be a red flag. It could indicate that a contractor’s workers have not been appropriately trained, especially when it comes to infection prevention.

Yet, this could be a double-edged sword. Will managers be willing to pay more for infection prevention services if...
the contractor has spent more time and money to thoroughly train their staff, ensure workers are certified, and increase worker pay in order to retain higher-quality workers? In a post-COVID world, many building managers will be grappling with this dilemma.

**New Cleaning Solution Technologies**

Advanced technologies are available that help us keep facilities safer and healthier, and more are expected to hit the market in the years to come. For instance, floorcare technologies are now available that help inhibit the growth of pathogens. In addition, disinfectant electrostatic sprayers, now available from several manufacturers, have become the right tools at the right time.

How they are used may vary; however, the end results of more effective and faster surface disinfecting are essentially the same. Further, tools that can take a person’s temperature quickly and easily then document it with a picture of the person; UV foot baths; large disinfectant misters at building entrances; phones that can create thermal imaging of people to help identify those with a high-temperature, while not all cleaning specific, may be worth discussion in proposals.

**Robotics**

Robotic cleaning systems will also become the right tools at the right time. Earlier, we addressed the fact that ensuring our infection prevention technicians are well-trained and well-paid may result in higher costs for cleaning. The use of robotic machines that can perform repetitive tasks may be able to minimize those additional costs. What’s more, they free up workers to perform other functions that can help keep facilities cleaner, safer and healthier at a lower overall cost.

Instead of scrubbing floors, for instance, cleaning technicians can now detail clean and disinfect high-touch areas more frequently, use ATP monitors* more regularly to check cleaning efficacy, and turn to robots to assist when finding labour is difficult.

Finally, there is one more thing BSCs in a post-COVID world will need to do, and that is to communicate. More to the point, they must become effective communicators.

As infection prevention specialists, BSCs should expect to meet with building owners, managers, and users regularly to update them on what steps are being implemented to keep their facility healthy. They should also expect to become a spokesperson for their company. And last, BSCs will be expected to discuss preparedness: How quickly they can put steps into action should a crisis like this ever happen again.

Mike Sawchuk is a janitorial professional cleaning industry consultant with over 25 years of experience. He can be reached at (905) 932-6501 or via email at mike@sawchukconsulting.com.

* CIMS: Cleaning Industry Management Standard
* CMI: Cleaning Management Institute
* ATP monitors: Adenosine triphosphate bioluminescence measurement systems
New Whitepaper Outlines Facility Solutions for the New Normal

As businesses re-open and employees return to the workplace, the next phase of COVID-19 recovery is confidence cleaning.

ISSA and the Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC), a division of ISSA, have released a new whitepaper designed to help facility managers and end-users as they recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ensuring Your Facility Makes a Clean Start is a free, downloadable document that will help you better understand your customer’s challenges, and assist them with solutions such as:

• Performing a risk assessment: Identify high touch point areas and usage by customers, clients and visitors.
• Embracing visual cleaning: Perform tasks in front of occupants, shift how your staff interacts with them, and increase communication about the steps you’re taking to protect their health.
• Using proven techniques and technology: With increased demand and heightened occupant expectations, get back to the basics of cleaning and disinfection.

Download your copy today to understand the role you can play in confidence cleaning, and help your customers get back to business.

ISSA Show North America Goes Virtual

ISSA Show North America has announced that the 2020 show will move to a fully virtual event over the same dates, November 16 – 19, 2020. ISSA Show North America will remain the primary event to network, learn best practices, and discover new products and solutions for the commercial, institutional, and residential cleaning industry. The transition of the show to a virtual event will offer exceptional content, the ability to source new products, learn, share ideas, and network in a convenient online setting.

“Our mission statement doesn’t change as we connect as a united industry this November,” said Lindsay Roberts, Group Director, ISSA Show North America. “Every opportunity is still in front of us; it will just look and feel a little different. As we drew closer to the show dates it became clear a virtual event was our path forward.”

Roberts added, “We’ve all had to adapt this year, and the ISSA Show is no exception. This industry is resilient and positive. I believe we’ll take full advantage of the new opportunities that lay in front of us this year. We’re excited to build something effective and engaging for the industry we serve.”

Even More Value in Registration

Registration is open for the ISSA Show North America Virtual Experience. All registrants have even more options this year to make the most out of investing in world-class education, certifications and networking events.

The Virtual Experience features a mix of live and on-demand content available to all registrants through March 31, 2021 making it easier than ever for industry professionals to participate from wherever and at their own pace.

Education programs and networking opportunities will offer insights on the challenges the industry has faced, lessons learned, and how the industry – and the world – will look moving forward.

Not only has Early Bird Pricing been extended through September 30, the new Virtual Experience will offer:

• Virtual Exhibit Directory showcasing industry leading companies and their new product innovation solutions for attendees.

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Re-open With an Integrated & Transparent Cleaning Plan

Communication and transparency are crucial elements of a successful re-opening

By TIM POSKIN

As the world continues to re-open from pandemic closures, the challenge to quickly develop and implement standards and guidelines is the highest priority for cleaning organizations. Cleaning and maintenance managers have long struggled to convince upper management that cleaning is more than a commodity, and provides enormous value to the overall organization. Fortunately, the value of cleaning has been hiding in plain sight all along.

Amidst the coronavirus pandemic, the world has quickly realized the harm that can result from improper cleaning, and has embraced the value of thorough cleaning for health and safety. In this new reality, cleaning is in the spotlight with a critical set of eyes watching and questioning every move. You can benefit by being open and transparent in the following key areas as you move forward:

Budgeting

Sometimes it takes more than just a little push to create forward movement. The pandemic has affected the economy in unimagined ways. In the past, cleaning budgets were subject to regular reductions. Now, without a clear definition of what your cleaning department needs to effectively move forward, the pressure to reduce costs could still threaten your budget. Have open and honest discussions that include realistic budgeting for realistic time frames. Share specifics on what your new service levels offer as well as the information on which you are basing the needed changes. Revisit the financial plan often as the standards and guidelines change as re-opening accelerates and decelerates.

Training and certification

Training improves employees’ knowledge and job performance. Training also helps cleaning workers understand why their work is critical to the health and safety of building occupants. It’s important for clients to see your staff properly performing the services described in your cleaning plan.

The pandemic quickly pushed on-site, group education and training to online learning. By utilizing online training and certification programs, you can quickly weave new solutions into the cleaning...
GBAC STAR™ Services Accreditation for Building Service Contractors

Based on demand from the facility services sector, ISSA and its Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC) division plan to launch the new GBAC STAR™ Services Accreditation program in late September 2020. GBAC STAR Services will help building service contactors distinguish their cleaning, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention measures through third-party accreditation from GBAC’s biorisk experts.

The program will complement the rapidly growing GBAC STAR Facility Accreditation program, and outline specific protocols, work practices, and training requirements for cleaning contractors to earn the GBAC STAR Services designation. The program will be designed to supplement other industry certifications and training, but with an emphasis on validating firms’ procedures to help their customers prepare for, respond to, and recover from infectious disease outbreaks. Complete program details... continued on page 8

Re-open With an Integrated and Transparent Cleaning Plan

Plan and effectively meet demand. Prevent unproductive and risk outcomes by properly training your cleaning staff for the duties your customers expect them to perform.

Marketing and signage

Communicate to the public in detail the tasks the cleaning department performs, and how it is meeting standards and guidelines. Post signage that shares how and how often areas are cleaned and disinfected. A few examples are:

• This restroom is cleaned and disinfected daily using an EPA-registered disinfectant.
• For your safety, this facility is regularly disinfected.
• The cleaning workers in this facility are certified by ISSA’s Cleaning Management Institute (CMI).

Visibility of cleaning

Professional appearance is important and can leave a lasting impression. The sight of appropriately attired workers using professional cleaning tools and equipment builds confidence among the facility patrons. If personal protective equipment (PPE) is required, ensure that building occupants see cleaning staff not only wearing PPE, but also wearing it correctly. A face mask worn incorrectly is a poor visual communication of your cleaning plan as well as a reflection of poor leadership. If masks are recommended, continuously emphasize to your staff the benefits and importance of wearing them correctly.

Cleaning processes and outcomes

Cleaning is not just for aesthetics or appearance. Cleaning is for health. Looking clean is important, but being clean – achieving a condition free of unwanted matter – is more important. Now is the time to have a robust and transparent cleaning plan and execute it at a high level. Making it up as you go leaves your organization at risk. Instead of checking a box “clean” or “dirty,” track detailed data on how facilities are cleaned and levels of cleanliness, then optimize your processes for improvement.

Cleaning is essential to our country’s shift toward reopening. Whether cleaning plans are executed in-house or with contractors, they should be integrated and transparent. Use every resource at your disposal to ensure that when the outcomes are measured, they receive a high grade you will be proud for everyone to see. The world is watching the cleaning industry. Now is the time to shine!

Tim Poskin is founder and systems integrator of ISSA’s Cleaning Change Solutions™ Consulting and serves as the executive director of the ISSA Workloading and Benchmarking Committee. Poskin may be reached at tim@issa.com.

SOURCE: CMM Magazine

An Easier Registration Process

ISSA Show North America Virtual Experience registration passes are now available. To make things easier and more convenient, all virtual and in-person passes are the same price and can be used interchangeably. Anyone who registered for the in-person event now has access to the virtual event.

Starting August 17, all packages and pricing will shift to a simpler layout. Expo Only Virtual Passes are FREE to all ISSA members and non-members. The Expo Only Virtual Pass will feature a virtual trade show and several education sessions typically delivered on the show floor.

To gain All-Access to the Virtual Experience, registrants can upgrade to the All-Access Pass for $99 as an... continued on page 11
A 1967 study conducted in a North American hospital concluded what many observers believed was obvious: “The floors of hospital wards become contaminated with large numbers of bacteria, including Staphylococcus aureus, and are commonly assumed to be important reservoirs of hospital infection.”

With this conclusion, you might assume that the researchers’ next step would be to recommend that floors be cleaned and disinfected more often to eliminate or reduce this infection. However, that was not the case at all.

According to researchers, “using conventional cleaning methods – in this case, string mops and buckets – only resulted in floors becoming heavily contaminated one hour after [cleaning], as contaminated as they were before such treatment. [Because of this] there appeared to be little or no advantage in cleaning floors.”

Further, these researchers reported that “even if regular disinfection of floors reduces the mean level of contamination, such treatment cannot be considered useful in preventing infection unless pathogens on the floor are transferred either by air or by contact to patients in the ward,” neither of which was a significant concern.

Finally, the researchers suggested hospital floors needed to be cleaned only when “visibly soiled” and disinfected only when floors came into contact with bodily fluids that could spread contamination. Those recommendations eventually became the stance taken by most North American hospital administrators when it came to floor care.

What’s more, that recommendation was re-endorsed in 2003 when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an infection control directive for hospitals that stated: “Extraordinary cleaning and decontamination of floors in healthcare settings are unwarranted. Studies have demonstrated that floors’ disinfection offers no advantage over regular detergent/water cleaning, and has minimal or no impact on the occurrence of healthcare-associated infections. Additionally, newly-cleaned floors become rapidly re-contaminated from airborne microorganisms and those transferred from shoes, equipment wheels, and body substances.”

In other words, the CDC re-stated what the researchers reported 36 years earlier – floors needed to be cleaned only if visibly soiled. Taking the time to thoroughly and effectively clean floors was a waste of time.

That pretty much was “end of story” for another 13 years, even though many hospital administrators and housekeepers, and other cleaning professionals suspected that contaminated floors could spread infections in hospitals. Further, many believed contaminated floors were a key reason nosocomial (health-care-acquired) infections were escalating in so many parts of the world.

A more recent study, this one in 2016, proved them right. Once again, this study found that hospital floors were often “heavily contaminated,” but concluding that this was not an issue, because floors are rarely touched, was incorrect. What they found:

Floors are frequently contacted by objects that are subsequently touched by hands (e.g. shoes, socks, slippers). In addition, it is not uncommon for high-touch objects such as call buttons and blood pressure cuffs to be in contact with the floor. In other words, floors are an under-appreciated reservoir for pathogen transmission.

To reach this conclusion, the researchers tested floors for up to three days in 10 patient rooms housing people infected with *C. difficile* or MRSA. During that period, what they discovered was that:
ISSA Releases Enhanced Workloading & Bidding Tool

ISSA has taken another step in helping members validate, document and analyze their essential cleaning services by updating the ISSA Workloading & Bidding Tool. The enhancements to this popular member estimating tool include the ability for metric calculations and the ability to add daily and weekly frequencies, which has become more necessary as facilities request increased activity to reduce risk of cross-contamination during the COVID-19 pandemic. This upgraded tool is available online and is for the exclusive use of ISSA members worldwide.

The enhanced Workloading & Bidding Tool with Metric Conversion helps ISSA members build out a location or cleaning project by entering room type, area (in either square meters or square feet), and the activities to perform; activities correspond with ISSA’s 612 Cleaning Times, a guide to industry time standards for performing cleaning tasks.

Not only can an ISSA member set up a floor care program.

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GBAC STAR™ Services

Accreditation for Building Service Contractors

and pricing will be available soon.

“Building service contractors play a fundamental role in the fight to protect the public against COVID-19 and other infectious diseases,” said ISSA Executive Director John Barrett. “As misinformation about cleaning and disinfection persists worldwide, we know how important it is for BSCs to demonstrate their credibility. GBAC STAR Services Accreditation will provide this critical third-party validation.”

Express your interest today and be among the first companies to accredit to GBAC STAR Services upon its official launch. Completing the interest form does not obligate your firm to apply for GBAC STAR Services.

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Flooring & Superbugs

• The floors did become contaminated with the germs and bacteria causing these diseases.
• The contamination spread to difference surfaces in each hospital room.
• Contamination from these rooms even spread to “high-touch” surfaces in adjacent rooms, in the nursing station, and on portable equipment.

In other words, hospital staff encountered these contaminants when performing their duties, and started spreading them around the hospital, putting their own health – and that of other patients – at risk.

The 2016 study and similar – as well as subsequent studies – have changed everything. Now we know contamination on floors does propagate, having the potential of spreading disease to others.

Further, this has become an even bigger concern with COVID-19. Studies conducted in Wuhan, China, looking at hospitalized patients with COVID, found that 94 per cent of swabs taken from ICU floors and 100 per cent of swabs taken from general ward areas of the hospital tested positive for the disease. This means that just as with the tests involving C. difficile or MRSA discussed earlier, COVID can spread from floors to people, infecting them with the disease.

STEPs WE CAN Take

Cleaning professionals are in the vanguard of helping all types of facilities, not just medical locations, control the spread of COVID and other infections. This means we must step up to the plate and help guide building administrators on how to keep floors clean and healthy.

In hospitals, it was noted that people can encounter floor pathogens whenever they touch their socks or shoes. In an office or school, the same is true. Plus, individuals can come into contact with floors whenever a purse or briefcase is placed on the floor and then picked up; when picking something up off the floor; when tying shoes; and more.

Here are some recommendations:

Never ignore the floors. Visibly clean really does not mean anything, especially when it comes to floors.

Set up a floor care program. Because we know floors can harbor infection, we need a system, a plan to help keep them as healthy as possible. What is needed is a floor care program detailing the frequency of floor cleaning and type of cleaning, as well as cleaning methods, solutions, and equipment used. This should be formalized in writing.

Evaluate floor cleaning methods. We know that mop-and-bucket cleaning spreads disease. But what are our options? (Those will be discussed later in this article).

Test and retest. We must test and retest our floor cleaning performance to see if it is proving effective. One way to accomplish this is the use of ATP monitors. A floor cleaning procedure may suffice initially, but due to changes in foot traffic, climate, or other factors, it may not prove effective at a later date. In such cases, the cleaning methods must be re-evaluated.

ALTERNATIVE FLOOR CARE SYSTEMS

Whereas our researchers back in 1967 knew of only one floor cleaning system – mops and buckets – today we have several alternatives. Most produce far more effective results, reducing floor contamination significantly.

The key difference between the systems are cost, costs to own, facility needs, flexibility, and training requirements.

For instance, automatic scrubbers have served us well. However, these machines can be costly to select, and due to service requirements, costly to own. They work well for cleaning larger floor surfaces but may prove difficult to use for cleaning a smaller area, such as a hospital patient

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When is it Justified to Use Disinfectants?

Around the globe the coronavirus is surging, and Canada has not been spared. As of July 23, 2020, Quebec had nearly 59,000 confirmed cases and Ontario, slightly more than 36,000. In both provinces, the number of cases is increasing.

This is causing government and health officials to go back to the drawing board. They must try and determine why this is happening, and what new steps can be implemented to slow down the case load.

To do so, they are asking questions such as:

- Have Canadians become complacent?
- Are they not wearing masks or practicing social distancing?
- Should the Federal Government have a statement and stricter policies requiring all citizens to wear masks?

These and many other questions are now being asked. Moreover, leaders in the professional cleaning industry are also investigating what steps they are taking that may not be working.

One that is garnering considerable interest is the use — and potential misuse and overuse — of disinfectants.

From the start of the pandemic, cleaning professionals began disinfecting just about anything and everything in the facilities they maintain.

These disinfectants have been applied manually to surfaces or, in many cases, misted or sprayed using electrostatic devices.

As far as the wide-spread use of disinfectants, the same thing happened in 2002/2003 with SARS. At that time, people in Hong Kong said so much sodium hypochlorite (bleach) was applied to surfaces that the entire city wafted of bleach for weeks. It was later determined that the use of these enormous amounts of disinfectants played a minor role in stopping the spread of SARS.

Further, we should be aware that in both cases – SARS and coronavirus – the continual use of large amounts of bleach can have several harmful consequences. Among these are the following:

- Bleach and other types of disinfectants have served us well. However, now we know that the thousands of tons of disinfectants sold worldwide annually are negatively impacting the environment, aquatic life and wildlife. Water is being polluted, as is soil, the air we breathe, and this is impacting the quality of the food we consume.
- These products can also harm the user. In the U.S., the Poison Data System reported earlier this year that there was a more than 20 per cent spike in the number of people going to emergency rooms primarily due to “exposures to cleaners and disinfectants” as people attempt to stop the spread of the virus.
- Pathogens are becoming immune to many disinfectants. This is a serious concern and is remarkably similar to what is happening with the over-prescription of antibiotics. The “overuse of antibacterial cleaning products [disinfectants] in the home, the community, and in healthcare facilities may lead to increased development of resistance to common microorganisms,” according to Health Canada.

Because of these and other issues now surfacing in the professional cleaning industry, many wonder the following:

- Do we need to use all these disinfectants?
- Are they helping us stop the spread of coronavirus?

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When is it Justified to Use Disinfectants?

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Flooring & Superbugs

room or a classroom. Also, they are best used to clean open floor areas, not those constricted with furniture or obstacles. All these issues must be evaluated when selecting one of these machines.

Other options, which have proven comparable to automatic scrubbers, are referred to as “autovac,” “dispense-and-vac,” and “univac” machines.

These single-piece floor cleaning systems are less costly to purchase and certainly less costly own. They can clean floor areas under furniture and fixtures; however, they may not prove as effective for cleaning an exceptionally large floor area. Once again, these issues must be examined when selecting a floor cleaning system.

Floors are the largest surfaces in the facilities we clean. View them as the foundation of cleaning. Without clean and healthy floors, the entire facility is not clean and healthy.

Drew Bunn is Canadian director of sales for Kaivac Canada, manufacturers of professional cleaning tools and equipment engineered to help protect health. He can be reached at dbunn@kaivac.com.


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Enhanced Workloading & Bidding Tool

document the cleaning tasks they will be performing or the impact on services that new product solutions could offer. They will also be able to show the days of the week each task will be performed, along with the number of times per day.

Members who have used the earlier version of the calculator will have a one-month transition period to be able to transfer their saved calculations to the new version or to download them.

For any questions on accessing the myISSA portal, utilizing the ISSA Workloading & Bidding Tool, or becoming an ISSA member, please contact Tracy MacDonald at (905) 665-8001 or email tracy@issa-canada.com.

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Enter Justified Disinfection

To answer these and similar questions, let’s revisit a cleaning principle that is not necessarily new, but which is gaining new momentum and attention due to COVID. This is especially true now, as people are exposed to images, beamed round the world, of entire streets and beaches being disinfected.

So we are clear, this principal does not object to the use of disinfectants specifically. Not at all. When used appropriately, and when and where needed, disinfectants can protect individuals and entire communities from the risks of microbial diseases.

It is when they are not used correctly or are overused, that those advocating justified disinfection voice concerns. Many believe this overuse of disinfectants is happening right now in many parts of the globe, as we try to control the spread of this infection.

So, how can we use disinfectants appropriately? Here are some guidelines:

Product Preparation. Ensure the disinfectant is diluted correctly and selected based on the kill claims listed on the label. If this product is to be used to fight the coronavirus, it should also be listed on the N-List of disinfectants, those evaluated by the Environmental Protection Agency, and proven to be effective at killing the germs that cause the disease.

Application. Applying disinfectants correctly is critical. They should always be applied after a surface has been cleaned. Once applied to a surface, dwell time must be adhered to, and the disinfectant must remain wet before wiping. (If the disinfectant dries, the entire procedure must be repeated).

What to disinfect. Cleaning professionals and building managers should conduct a high-touch audit, determining which surfaces in a facility are touched most frequently, requiring them to be cleaned and disinfected more regularly. This will vary from facility to facility.

Frequency of disinfection. Studies indicate that some high touch surfaces become re-contaminated – returning to original contamination – within two to six hours. In such cases, disinfection frequencies may need to be re-examined.

Along with prompting the proper use of disinfectants, those advocating justified disinfecting believe that disinfectants are often not needed when performing most cleaning tasks. Their alternative: effective cleaning.

This means selecting the appropriate cleaning tools and cleaning solutions, and using them correctly.

Many point to a May 7, 2020, directive issued from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that states, “most surfaces and objects just need normal, routine cleaning to ensure they do not promote the spread of disease.”

As to the coronavirus specifically, the CDC adds: “Normal routine cleaning with soap and water will decrease how much of the virus is on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure.”

Understanding the Rush

The fact that cleaning professionals and building owners and managers rushed to use disinfectants – and used them just about everywhere – is probably a normal reaction. When coronavirus first surfaced on North American shores, we knew little about the disease or how it is transmitted.

Now we do. We have learned a lot. This is reflected in the declining number of deaths from the disease. Doctors now know ways to treat coronavirus victims, treatments that were not known just a few months ago.

When it comes to cleaning, a re-evaluation of the use of disinfectants is now called for. If all that is needed is effective cleaning, that will help lower the costs to clean facilities, as well as be healthier for the environment, the user, and the building users.

Remember, our primary goal as cleaning professionals is to protect health, not harm it.

Steve Teadale is co-founder and vice president of Scientific Affairs at InnuScience. Based in Quebec, InnuScience is a global leader in environmentally preferable commercial cleaning solutions based on biotechnology. He can be reached at info.us@innuscience.com.
he cleaning industry has seen multiple transformations since the spring of this year when the coronavirus pandemic gripped the world. ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association, has addressed this issue with immediate action. But as the industry evolves, we must make sure that we not only accomplish our short-term goals, but also look to future challenges and continue our due diligence by planning for the long-term.

As cleaning has become more widely recognized as the key to the health and safety of our building occupants and visitors, we must ensure the same for our cleaning crews who are on the frontlines each and every day. It is important that these heroes understand their roles not only to protect the public, but also themselves.

ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) certification is truly designed to meet all the best practices of running an efficient cleaning business and delivering high-quality results. As the cleaning industry has changed, CIMS has also had to evolve. We now realize that not only must we take special care to train our cleaning crews who are on the frontlines each and every day, but also provide standards for running a healthy business.

With sustainability continuing to be a top concern, the Green Building (GB) element of CIMS certification provides verification that meets LEED requirements. In fact, the official CIMS-GB certificate is all you need for a building to receive the points for green cleaning.

CIMS / CIMS-GB certification is a powerful marketing tool to allow a company to stand out from the competition. Essentially, the Standard provides a proven framework that demonstrates that an organization is customer-centred, quality-focused and can outpace the competition. CIMS / CIMS-GB certified firms are certainly the industry elite.

The key takeaway here is that we always need to take care of our customers, our employees, and our planet. Until the next edition, may we all have implemented the proper practices to create safer spaces for everyone in all corners of the world. Stay safe.

Charlie Janowicz is the CIMS Account Executive for ISSA with 30 years experience in the industry, including the education sector, owner/operator of a BSC firm, and sales / management roles with leading janitorial distributors. With a passion for the ISSA mission of “changing the way the world views cleaning,” Charlie has participated in multiple training sessions, including restroom, carpet and floor care, and routine cleaning methodology. He can be reached at charlie@issa.com.
GBAC STAR™ Services will help building service contractors distinguish their cleaning, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention measures through third-party accreditation from GBAC’s biorisk experts. The program will be designed to supplement other industry certifications and training, but with an emphasis on validating firms’ procedures to help their customers prepare for, respond to, and recover from infectious disease outbreaks. Complete program details and pricing will be available in late September 2020.