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NEWS, VIEWS AND INFORMATION FOR THE FACILITY SERVICE PROVIDER

## SPECIAL FEATURE

# The ESSENTIAL WORKER



## What Government Needs to Know About the Impact of Our Industry

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Although the information contained in the following article contains data from the United States, we feel it demonstrates positive actions being taken by state governments to recognize the sanitary maintenance and supply industry as the "essential" service it is to ensure the health and safety of communities.*

By DR. GAVIN MACGREGOR-SKINNER

**T**hroughout the COVID-19 pandemic, every day we heard the government and the media using the term "essential workers." But who exactly are those essential workers?

You might say that they're the doctors and nurses in hospitals, first responders like firefighters and police officers, and those who work on farms and in grocery stores to ensure we have food on the table. They're people that keep planes,

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# contractor's corner

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trains, buses, shipping, and utilities (water, electricity, natural gas, sewage, trash, cable TV, internet) running. Essential workers keep services functioning.

But is “essential” describing the workers themselves? Or only the work they do?

Do cleaning professionals meet the definition? Is it just some of us, or all of us? The cleaning industry worldwide focuses on cleaning as an investment in human, animal, and environmental health by making the scientific connection between cleaning and health.

My opinion is that workers in the cleaning industry have not been recognized as being essential during the COVID-19 pandemic. I see a disconnect between how the roles of cleaning professionals were described and what they experienced on the front lines. I see a disconnect between bathroom cleaning, shared space cleaning, high touch points, floor mopping, hard surface dusting, carpet vacuuming, and their value in decreasing the risk of transmission of germs and being infected.

## EVOLVING GUIDANCE

On March 30, 2020, the mayor of Washington, DC, announced a stay-at-home order that would go into effect on April 1, 2020. The order stated that residents may only leave their residences to engage in essential activities, including to work at essential businesses that the order defined. Anyone found to be violating the order would be charged with a misdemeanor and subject to a \$5000 (US) fine and/or 90 days in prison. On the same day, the governors of Maryland and Virginia issued similar stay-at-home orders, but the penalties for violating those orders were different from those in Washington, DC.

I have a hospital ID card that states: “The bearer of this identification card is an essential employee, and this identification card serves as an emergency pass through police, fire, and armed services checkpoints.” For COVID-19, I used it for the first time that first week of April 2020. It was 8:15 p.m., and I was two blocks from the hospital where I had been all day, training doctors, nurses, and other staff in the emergency department, on how to don and doff PPE. As I crossed the street, I was stopped by a police officer.

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I flashed my hospital ID card, and he “thanked me for my service.” I looked over my shoulder, and 15 hospital workers, including cleaning staff who had attended my training, were crossing the street, and the officer stopped them. They were contractors and did not have the same hospital ID card that I carried. I intervened, explaining that they worked with me in the hospital. The police officer asked a few additional questions, and then we were on our way.

I then realized that this was a problem. They had no ID to show they were essential workers. Maybe the situation would have been different if I had not been there, I don’t know, but it did worry me.

On March 19, 2020, the United States Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) issued a document entitled *Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce Guidance*. This guide was primarily intended to help officials and organizations identify essential work functions, allowing them access to their workplace during times of community restrictions, such as stay-at-home orders.

As circumstances changed over the course of the pandemic, CISA published four additional updates to reflect the changing landscape of the nation’s COVID-19 response. The current Version 4.1 – published August 5, 2021 – provides guidance on how jurisdictions and critical infrastructure owners can use the list to assist in prioritizing the ability of essential workers to work safely, while supporting critical infrastructure operations. It provides guidance to reduce risk in several ways, including encouraging essential workers to be vaccinated, providing the appropriate protective gear, and creating and promoting policies and procedures that prevent the spread of illness among the essential workforces. This document illustrates that critical infrastructure is a large umbrella term encompassing sectors from energy, to health, to agriculture.

## WHAT DOES “ESSENTIAL” MEAN?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “essential” as “extremely important and necessary.” Almost everyone would say their work is essential for some reason. But in a disaster, emergency, or pandemic,

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## ACHIEVEMENT

# BC Contractors Achieve GBAC STAR Service Accreditation

Two facility service providers in British Columbia have achieved the industry-leading GBAC STAR™ Service Accreditation, denoting the validation of their cleaning, disinfection, and infection prevention programs.

**Alpine Building Maintenance** (Delta) and **BEST Service Pros Ltd.** (Coquitlam) have secured the certification, which aims to help building service contractors prepare for, respond to, and recover from biorisks such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The GBAC STAR Service Accreditation program provides third-party validation of a BSCs cleaning, disinfection, and infection prevention protocols and procedures.

GBAC STAR accreditations are renewed annually to ensure that organizations are focused on continual improvement. To date, 42 BSCs servicing thousands of facilities around the world have achieved accreditation.

“There truly is a science to cleaning, and GBAC STAR Service Accreditation helps commercial cleaning companies follow the science to properly clean for health,” said GBAC Executive Director Patricia Olinger. “This makes all types of facilities safer, from offices to schools to airports to convention centres.”

“When facility service providers are GBAC STAR accredited, they give building owners, managers, and occupants the confidence that the right cleaning, disinfection, and infection prevention protocols are being followed,” said ISSA Executive Director John Barrett. “Plus, their accreditation makes them well-positioned to help the facilities they manage pursue and maintain Facility Accreditation.”

GBAC STAR accreditation is bestowed by the Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC), a Division of ISSA, which provides training, guidance, accreditation, certification, crisis management assistance and leadership to

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buildings and other facilities operating. And while folks during the COVID-19 pandemic have transitioned to spending most of their time at home, tradespeople have continued to uphold safety and quality of life standards for residences, offices, hospitals, nursing homes, and commercial buildings.

For the 21 states deferring to the federal government’s CISA guidelines, a wide range of trades are considered essential, including those supporting the construction, maintenance, or rehabilitation of several sectors, from energy to public works and infrastructure to communications.

The 22 states and Washington, DC, that have developed their own guidelines use similarly broad language to encompass as many of these professionals as possible.

Colorado, for example, refers to the construction and skilled trades broadly, but only gives a few examples, relying heavily on “including, but not limited to” language.

Similarly, Alabama simply refers to any workers in “construction or construction-related services” as essential.

Illinois has taken a slightly different approach in that the state specifically lists some examples of what it considers critical trades in its essential worker order. These include, but are not necessarily limited to, plumbers, electricians, exterminators, cleaning and janitorial staff, and security workers.

Massachusetts guidance gets even more specific, with the state listing which “construction-related” activities it considers necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences, businesses, and buildings, such as hospitals. The state’s list goes on to include specific types of worksites and projects considered essential too.

## FEDERAL GUIDELINES

Seven states have no guidance. Of the 43 states with essential worker orders or directives, 21 (blue in Figure One) now defer to the federal definitions developed by CISA. On August 10, 2021, CISA published a 23-page *Advisory Memorandum on Ensuring Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers’ Ability to Work During the*



*COVID-19 Response*. On page 23, under the section heading *Hygiene Products and Services*, it states that essential workers include “workers providing disinfection services for all essential facilities and modes of transportation, and who support the sanitation of all food manufacturing processes and operations from wholesale to retail.”

The graphic that accompanies the CISA Advisory Memorandum included 16 sectors listing *Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers*. Unfortunately, cleaning professionals did not make the graphic (*Figure Two*), but they did make the document.

## COVID-19 VACCINE PRIORITIZATION FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) provides recommendations for who will receive the COVID-19 vaccine while there are limited doses, taking into consideration the vaccine’s physical effect on different age groups, ethnicities, and people with underlying medical conditions.

CDC’s *COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots* guidance, published on October 27, 2021, stated that “people aged 18-61 years are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting, may get a booster shot based on their individual risks and benefits.” CDC also provided an example list of workers who may get COVID-19 booster shots, and cleaning professionals were not on the list:

- First responders (e.g, healthcare workers, firefighters, police, congregate care staff).
- Education staff (e.g, teachers, support staff, daycare workers).

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# Is it Time to Upgrade Your Cleaning Supplies?

There are a few telltale signs that a cleaning tool may no longer suit the requirements of cleaning staff

By CARLOS ALBIR JR.

**T**hroughout the pandemic, facility managers and building service contractors have had to act quickly and prioritize cleaning measures to keep visitors and employees safe. A recent *study* found that 88 per cent of consumers pay close attention to the cleanliness levels of the businesses they frequent. Additionally, 86 per cent of consumers also value seeing proof that these places, including retail stores, restaurants, offices, gyms, or schools, are cleaned often.

In response, business leaders ramped up cleaning to give consumers and employees confidence while visiting their facilities. In fact, job openings for cleaning workers jumped 75 per cent from March 2019 to March 2020 due to the increased demand. To properly complete their work, these cleaning professionals need a range of cleaning supplies at their disposal. Knowing how to use them, and when to refresh or replace them is equally essential.

## USING AND REPLACING CLEANING TOOLS CORRECTLY

Cleaning tools are responsible for the proper application of cleaning and disinfecting products. These may include mops and buckets, brushes and brooms, microfibre cloths, and more. Given the number of tasks that cleaning teams are now expected to complete daily, it can be easy to forget when these tools need to be replaced or upgraded. However, doing so on a regular basis is one of the keys to upholding the highest standards of cleanliness in commercial facilities.

There are a few telltale signs that a cleaning tool may no longer suit the requirements of cleaning staff. Consider the following “commandments of cleaning supplies” to ensure that employees have everything they need to successfully clean and disinfect.

**(1) If it’s broken, fix it or replace it.**

The easiest way to determine if a cleaning tool needs to be replaced is to assess whether it can still be used in the way a manufacturer intends. For example,

if the handle of a broom is cracking, a bucket has a leak or broken handle, or a microfibre cloth is fraying and has holes, you need to either fix the item or replace it. In some cases, repairs may make more financial sense. In other cases, purchasing a new tool is easier.

Broken tools can lead to injury, as they’re not able to be used correctly and employees may modify their movements or how they perform a certain task. In 2019, janitors and their employers reported over *18,600 workplace injuries*, likely resulting from faulty equipment. Common injuries cleaning staff face include slips and falls, chemical exposure, skin allergies, and more. In order to keep these dedicated workers safe, regularly check inventory to make sure all items are in good working condition. Keeping replacements in stock and easily accessible by staff can help prevent potential injuries and the resulting time away from work.

**(2) Avoid cross-contamination at all costs.**

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# The Essential Worker

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- Food and agriculture workers.
- Corrections officers.
- U.S. Postal Service workers.
- Public transit workers.
- Grocery store workers.

I can't stress enough how important it is to consider the words we use when emphasizing perspectives and priorities during a situation like the COVID-19 pandemic or any emergency. When we review how the government and the media used the phrases "essential workers" and "essential work," I think this helps explain why so many people in the cleaning industry feel left out and not appreciated. We know that some of our essential workers, the ones that continued to report to duty and risk their lives and the lives of their families, experience greater rates of housing instability, food insecurity, and financial hardships. And then, many of them were infected and had COVID-19 disease.

A study published Nov. 9, 2020, by Thomas Selden and Terceira Berdahl from the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality in the *Journal of American Medical Association's Internal Medicine*, estimated that up to 74 million Americans nationwide were at heightened risk of becoming infected, either because they were essential workers themselves, or shared households with someone who was. This study also stated that up to 61 per cent of these essential workers had underlying health issues that put them at increased risk of severe COVID-19

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## GBAC STAR Service Accreditation Achievement

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government, commercial, and private entities looking to mitigate, quickly address, and/or recover from biological threats and real-time crises.

GBAC also offers Facility Accreditation for facility owners, operators and managers.

For more information on the GBAC STAR Service Accreditation, please [click here](#).

# How to Tell it's Time to Upgrade Cleaning Supplies

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When a staff member isn't adequately trained on proper cleaning procedures, there can be serious, negative consequences, like cross-contamination. Cross-contamination, also called cross-infection, occurs when germs that cause diseases are transferred via unhygienic processes, thus leading to harmful health effects. A common



example is when someone cleans the top of a toilet seat with a rag, then uses the same rag to wipe a sink or door handles.

To minimize the risk of cross-contamination, consider adding colour-coded rags, mop heads, and buckets to your team's roster of cleaning supplies. Each area within a facility, like the kitchens, washrooms, and common areas, should be cleaned from top to bottom with a different-coloured set of cleaning tools to minimize cross-contamination. Additionally, once a towel has been used and folded over a few times for cleaning, it should be replaced with a fresh, clean cloth to reduce the spread of germs.

After each shift, ensure items are stored properly in a janitorial closet that has significant ventilation or airflow to help items dry well and avoid the growth of harmful bacteria. If tools need laundering, complete this process and be sure that clean mop heads and cloths are ready for the next shift.

### (3) Switch to sustainable options.

In some cases, your cleaning team may be equipped with tools that are working properly; however, now is the time to ask yourself if those tools are meeting your facility's sustainability goals. Some of those goals could include producing less waste, increasing recycling metrics, achieving zero emissions by a certain date, and so on. If your current cleaning supplies aren't meeting the goals you've outlined, consider upgrading to cleaning tools that are constructed in a more environmentally friendly way and help reduce water,

chemicals and energy consumption once implemented in your facility.

In 2019, *nine in 10 consumers* said they would hold an organization accountable for their environmental impact. Therefore, selecting a sustainable cleaning tool manufacturer with responsibly made solutions, like those that are *Green Seal*-certified, can improve brand reputation. Making a small change, such as switching to durable and sustainable cleaning tools, can have a positive, lasting impact on the environment as well.

## INVEST IN YOUR CLEANING SUPPLIES

Overall, there are several examples of why a cleaning tool might need repair, replacement, refreshing or upgrading. Facility managers and building service contractors must remember that the tools that a cleaning team uses represent their facility or customer's facility, and the brand as a whole. Therefore, it's recommended that leaders keep a close eye on inventory and have open communication with staff to determine which improvements are needed and which upgrades best serve their needs. With the latest and most effective tools, you can improve your cleaning team's experience and your commitment to cleanliness.

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— Carlos Albir Jr. is Director of Operations at ABCO Cleaning Products, a leader in sustainable cleaning tools. ABCO is a family-owned, Certified Minority Business Enterprise with Green Seal certified products, headquartered in Miami, FL.

SOURCE: REMI Network



# The Benefits of Using Proportioning/Dispensing Systems

In recent years, the use of chemical proportioning/dispensing systems has increased in popularity as people are becoming increasingly aware of the advantages they bring across multiple levels of an organization. This article will explore some of these benefits in order to illustrate why you should choose a dispensing system today.

## **BENEFIT 1: TIME SAVING**

Thanks to the precise dilution provided by chemical dispensers at the push of a button, operators no longer need to manually mix products, which in turn contributes to more time being spent on

the cleaning process as opposed to the preparation of the solution.

Furthermore, the use of improperly diluted chemicals can often lead to having to repeat the work more often or re-doing it altogether since the job was not done well the first time. By accurately dispensing the pre-determined dilution rate for the task at hand, you can be sure that your cleaning solution remains consistent and completes the job correctly.

## **BENEFIT 2: WASTE REDUCTION**

Chemical dispensing systems reduce the risk of human error by automatically mixing the correct amounts of chemical

concentrate and water. As a result, there is not potential for using excess amounts of product and water, or for spillage during the manual pouring process.

In addition to less product waste, users will benefit from a reduction in packaging waste due to the fact that containers of concentrated chemical do not need to be replaced as frequently as their ready-to-use counterparts.

## **BENEFIT 3: EASE OF USE**

By eliminating the guesswork that is normally required with manual mixing, dilution systems are proven to be more user-friendly and easier to work with. New employees can be trained more quickly with less waste and fewer mistakes as there is no need to worry about the preparation of multiple dilution rates for different cleaning tasks. Proportioners are also available in a variety of styles to make sure you get the one that best suits your needs.

## **BENEFIT 4: HEALTH & SAFETY**

Not only are chemical dispensers convenient, but they can also help to ensure the health and safety of both staff and customers. The closed loop systems minimize the risk of an employee spilling concentrated chemicals on themselves or inhaling the potentially hazardous fumes, which could happen when mixing chemicals by hand. Since there are no spillages of the chemical

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should they become infected.

The risks to essential workers in all disciplines who could not work from home were clear from the beginning of the pandemic. But the risk of transmission to household members living with essential workers was also equally important when considering the potential for disease transmission. It is time to recognize the increasing risks that cleaning professionals take to do essential work to keep cities and towns functioning throughout the pandemic. I know the cleaning professionals in our industry are “essential,” and they are definitely not “expendable.”

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— Dr. Gavin Macgregor Skinner is director of the Global Biorisk Advisory Council™ (GBAC), a division of ISSA. As an infection prevention expert and consultant, he works to develop protocols and education for the global cleaning industry, empowering facilities, businesses, and cleaning professionals to create safe environments.

SOURCE: ISSA Today

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# The Benefits of Using Proportioning/Dispensing Systems

concentrate, the chances of slip and fall accidents are also reduced.

In addition to operator safety, your customers will equally benefit from the safety that comes with properly diluted chemicals. For example, if a floor finish is not mixed at the correct dilution rate, this can contribute to sticky or slippery floors. As a result, there is a greater risk of injuries. Similarly, if a disinfectant becomes overly diluted, this could have a negative impact on the performance of the chemical, resulting in the spread of germs and bacteria. Finally, if a chemical is too strong and not sufficiently diluted, this may lead to respiratory issues or skin reactions.

## BENEFIT 5: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

There are many reasons why dilution systems are an eco-friendly option. Firstly, when you opt to refill your existing reusable bottles with diluted chemical concentrates from a dispenser, this means less packaging compared to always using new bottles of a premixed solution. This, in turn, reduces excess waste as well as the frequency of shipments required. Fewer shipments not only translate to lower costs, but also to less fuel being used by shipping providers. Furthermore, the disposal of accurately diluted chemicals ensures that overly concentrated solutions are not making their way into municipal water systems. Although the impact may seem small, these actions can go a long way in reducing your carbon footprint. Lastly, if a company is seeking to be LEED-certified, the use of a chemical dilution system is an important aspect of that certification process.

## BENEFIT 6: PRODUCT OPTIMIZATION

Many dilution systems can be configured to dispense the same chemical concentrate at multiple dilution rates in order to handle various tasks. As such, the versatility of fewer products is maximized and less inventory is required. This, along with precise chemical dispensing, gives you greater product control.

The reduced packaging that comes along with highly concentrated solutions also leads to less storage space. In regard

to performance, accurate dilution from a dispenser contributes to better and more consistent cleaning results, and protects your surfaces from premature damage. A well cleaned establishment is also an essential component in maintaining a positive brand image.

## BENEFIT 7: COST SAVINGS

The common factor between all the benefits that come along with using a dispensing system is cost. Ultimately, the use of a chemical dispensing system will lead to an increase in cost savings in all aspects.

Time savings, waste reduction, mitigated risk of injury, fewer shipments, less inventory, minimal storage space, and greater product control are all factors that contribute to making sure you get a return on your investment in a timely manner.

An important factor to consider when purchasing a product is the cost in use. Comparing the litre's prices is not a good indication of the final price paid. The formula to obtain the cost in use is as follows:

$$\text{Unit Price/Unit Size} = \text{Price Per Litre} \\ \text{Price Per Litre} / \text{Sum of Parts from Dilution} = \text{Cost in Use (Per Litre)}$$

*An example can be seen below:*

### Dustbane's Bio-Bac II Free

Dilution	Price	Format
1:80	\$35.00	4 L

$$\$35.00 / 4L = \$5.75$$

$$\$5.75 / (1+80) = \mathbf{\$0.11 \text{ per litre}}$$

### Competitor's Product

Dilution	Price	Format
1:30	\$35.00	4 L

$$\$35.00 / 4L = \$9.26$$

$$\$9.26 / (1+30) = \mathbf{\$0.30 \text{ per litre}}$$

## DILUTION CHART

Use the *Dilution Chart* to determine the chemical to water ratio. The smaller number is the parts of chemical, while the large number is the parts of water.

— Information contained within this article was supplied by Dustbane Products Ltd. For more information, please visit [www.dustbane.ca](http://www.dustbane.ca).



# Tackling Employee Turnover with 'Tools of the Trade'

Solutions to attract new contract cleaning staff and in-house professionals

By BILL KOHLEY

**A**s businesses rebound from the pandemic, many are experiencing the effects of the “Great Resignation,” named after the trend of workers leaving jobs for better opportunities or retirement. According to a McKinsey survey, 40 per cent of employees are at least somewhat likely to leave their job by March 2022. With many industries like commercial cleaning, hospitality, foodservice and manufacturing facing a surplus of job openings, a shrinking

pool of interested workers, and a rise in retirement, it’s becoming more difficult to compete for talent.

The cleaning industry has historically experienced high turnover rates. Coupled with the fact that many older employees of in-house cleaning departments are leaving the workforce, this is putting additional pressure on facility managers and building service contractors (BSCs) to attract new and younger talent. Once hired, it’s important to make employees feel valued by demonstrating an ongoing commitment to their well-being. One

strategy for securing and retaining talent is adopting cleaning technologies that positively impact employee health, safety and engagement.

## THE STATE OF STAFFING IN THE CLEANING INDUSTRY

Annualized turnover rates in the contract cleaning industry have soared to as high as 200 per cent. Consider the rising costs on your business to hire, train, and retrain new employees, who may then exit in just six months. High turnover often

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# Big Business HR Hacks: How to Punch Above Your Weight as an SME

## Five Tips to Help Take Your HR Thinking to the Next Level

By MELISSA BEHREND

One of the challenges of being a small- and medium-sized business (SME) is that without a dedicated team of specialists, you often have to make do and cut corners when it comes to HR.

Here are five tips to help take your HR thinking to the next level.

### (1) GET FOCUSED

One of the common challenges for SMEs is not having dedicated HR staff. Often, HR functions are taken on by the business owner or perhaps the bookkeeper or accountant. Without having a strategic HR focus and expertise within the organizations, things will be missed, and mistakes will be made.

Sometimes the consequences are obvious and urgent – a letter claiming unfair dismissal or a WorkSafe fine. Other times, in cases of bullying and significant productivity issues, the issue can be harder to spot until the damage is already far-reaching and extensive.

**Hack:** Your people are the lifeblood of your business. Your focus on HR must reflect this. If you do not have the internal expertise in this area, bring in an experienced HR consultant who will help you get the most out of your people and protect your business from HR risk.

### (2) SUPERCHARGE YOUR JOB ADS

Recruitment is difficult enough – writing job descriptions, publishing job ads and endless rounds of interviews. But it can be frustrating for SMEs trying to compete for quality talent against much bigger players with established brands and reputations. The good news is that you can.

The employment market is changing. In a post-COVID world, employees are looking for more than just brand recognition and salary – many

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# Tackling Employee Turnover with ‘Tools of the Trade’

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leaves BSCs in a constant state of recruiting and onboarding. The quality and consistency of cleaning can suffer, and management problems can emerge which results in lower customer satisfaction.

In-house cleaning departments have traditionally experienced lower turnover, as many retain the same custodians for years or even decades. However, these “lifers” have been leaving the workforce over the last few years and will continue to do so as more age out of the industry. This creates staffing issues for in-house departments, too. Attracting young professionals to physically demanding, repetitive, and front-line custodial roles can be difficult. Thankfully, organizations can support hiring by leveraging today’s innovative cleaning technologies, and support employee retention by leaning into a culture that is rewarding and responsive to their needs.

### RECRUITING TODAY’S WORKERS

To recruit and retain empowered staff members, it’s important to understand the unique desires of millennial and Generation Z workers. Nearly 40 per cent of millennials have selected a role because the company was more sustainable than the alternative. Members of this generation are also more interested in employers supporting physical, social, financial, and emotional health than Generation X and baby boomers. Millennials value health and safety, so building a culture of safety is a tool to attract and keep them.

Meanwhile, according to a report from Deloitte and Network of Executive Women (NEW), 77 per cent of Gen Z respondents in a 2018 survey said it is important to work at organizations with values that align with their own. In fact, the environment is Gen Z’s top concern, so organizations hiring for cleaning roles must tap into this passion. Thankfully, innovations are pushing the industry forward in terms of sustainability.

The pandemic also heightened everyone’s awareness of cleaning and disinfection in facilities. This trend, in combination with the rising importance of corporate values, has led employees to ask new questions such as, “Am I working in a building with healthy air quality?”, “How safe am I while working?”;

“Are these new cleaning and disinfecting processes affecting me?”; and “Are they impacting social responsibility and sustainability?” Using technologies that support healthy work environments can help answer these critical questions.

### IMPLEMENTING FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AND CLEANING TOOLS

Innovative, safe, and sustainable cleaning technologies improve safety, reduce environmental impact and make cleaning jobs more enticing to millennials and Gen Z. BSCs and facility managers can consider the following solutions to attract contract cleaning staff and in-house professionals:

- **Indoor air quality (IAQ) enhancements** – IAQ has taken on a new level of importance during the pandemic due to increased knowledge around the impact of toxic chemicals on our air and the spread of respiratory illnesses. Help workers feel at ease with air quality monitoring solutions that reduce the presence of toxins from strong-smelling and harmful chemicals, and curb the risk of pathogen transmission. Enhancements may include shifting to safer cleaning chemicals, installing upgraded filters and air purifiers, and improving ventilation in your building.
- **Electrochemically activated solutions (ECAS)** – Adopting an innovative technology like ECAS demonstrates to cleaning professionals that their well-being and the environment matters. ECAS are cleaning and disinfecting solutions created using a generator, water, salt, and electricity. ECAS do not irritate eyes or skin, are drain- and disposal-friendly, and support good IAQ, making them an ideal solution for daily use.

Replacing numerous toxic cleaning products with ECAS reduces the risk of dangerous chemical mixtures and employee and customer exposure, and simplifies training. Because the solutions are generated on-site, cleaning teams can refill spray bottles and containers, further reducing waste, garbage, and carbon dioxide emissions.

- **Robotic equipment** – From automated floor scrubbers to smart vacuum

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# Charlie's ISSA CIMS Corner

with Charlie Janowicz, CIMS Account Executive

**H**APPY NEW YEAR... or is it? Here we are kicking off yet another year with this dreaded virus affecting the lives and livelihoods of so many people. Although many wonder when the pandemic will finally end, the real challenge is how do we adapt.

COVID-19 has presented a variety of both challenges and opportunities for cleaning industry organizations worldwide. We, at ISSA, believe that the Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) provides a viable solution to prepare and empower an organization well into the future.

CIMS is based on leading best practices which have been created by top industry experts who thoroughly understand what it takes to run a smooth operation, and deliver high quality results. It's CIMS certification that can assist

businesses overcome operational obstacles, including dealing with a pandemic.

CIMS certification provides the operational tools to combat a variety of challenges, including labour shortages, changes in employee pay structures, and how revenues can affect a business plan. It also provides effective ways to communicate these challenges to customers who will also be affected by these fluctuations. Additionally, customers will require reassurance that the health and safety of their building occupants and visitors are of the highest priority. The key is flexibility and transparency. The CIMS requirements not only assist

companies determine a positive route forward, but the certification also assists in terms of dealing with disinfecting SOP's or other related activities.

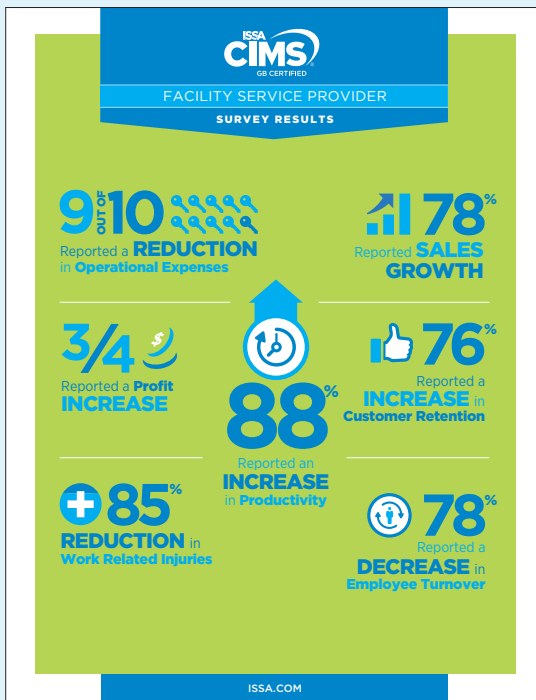
Over the past two years, ISSA has continued to certify companies through the use of virtual platforms. We have learned the effective use of current communication technologies such as ZOOM, Microsoft Teams and FaceTime to virtually review and inspect operations with accuracy and little disruption to the cleaning operation. Although we have

been successful on the virtual stage, that does not mean that we won't be back to some form of on-site assessment in the future. Like so many others, we too are adapting and evolving to suit the needs mandated by the current situation.

Our commitment to CIMS certified companies is to help them run more

efficiently across the full scope of their operation. This will, in turn, produce lower operational costs, a higher retention of customers, and provide a powerful marketing tool for potential prospects. Additionally, since employees are a company's greatest asset – especially during these unprecedented times – a survey of CIMS certified companies shows an 85 per cent reduction of employee injuries. Other benefits of CIMS certification include validated documentation of activities for support in customer grievances and legal actions, in addition to meeting any federal and/or local ordinances.

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**February 3, 10, 17 & 24:** CMI Train the Trainer virtual certification workshop. Noon to 2 p.m. (EDT). [Click here](#) for more information.

**February 23:** Coffee Talk Forum, featuring special guest Charlie Janowicz who will provide insight into the Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS). Noon to 1 p.m. (EST) each day. [Click here](#) to register.

**March 27 - April 2:** National Cleaning Week. [Click here](#) for more information.

**April 6-7:** ISSA Virtual CIMS Certification Expert (CCE) Workshop. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (EDT). [Click here](#) for more information.

**April 12-14:** Virtual CMI Certified Workloading Specialist Workshop. Noon to 2:30 p.m. (EDT) [Click here](#) for more information.

**May 18:** Virtual CMI Accredited Auditing Professional (AAP) Workshop. Noon to 3 p.m. (EDT). [Click here](#) for more information.

**June 8 & 9, 2022:** ISSA Show Canada, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, ON. [Click here](#) for more information.

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## Big Business HR Hacks

workers, especially younger people, place greater value on flexibility, career development and training, and an alignment between your business' values with their own. It's vital to be able to articulate all these things in job ads, on your website and in other brand communications.

**Hack:** Work with a respected copywriter or marketing professional to develop messaging that's compelling to potential employees and stands out from competitors.

### (3) BE STRATEGIC, NOT REACTIONARY

HR is about so much more than putting out fires and reacting to problems. Getting the most out of your people and keeping them happy is about taking a broad view and thinking strategically. Make sure you're clear

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# Charlie's <sup>ISSA</sup> CIMS Corner

As the worldwide cleaning industry association, ISSA has seen a dramatic increase in inquiries from facility managers looking to find quality cleaning companies. Our immediate answer is to provide them with a list of CIMS certified companies. Sometimes referenced as the ISO of the cleaning industry, we are also seeing CIMS becoming a requirement in RFPs. The best way to differentiate yourself from the competition, is to become CIMS certified because this achievement does not go unnoticed.

Facility owners and managers know that certified companies have mastered the five elements of the program:

1. Quality system.
  2. Service delivery.
  3. Human resources.
  4. Health, safety, and environmental stewardship.
  5. Management commitment.
- Optional:
6. Green Building (GB), which meets LEED requirements and can help an organization market as a green firm.

As you read this column, I am sure many of you will have questions. I am a firm believer in the CIMS process, and I encourage you to reach out to me as I am here and always willing to help. Please contact me at [charlie@issa.com](mailto:charlie@issa.com). Additionally, if you wish to review the standard, it can be downloaded from the ISSA Canada in both [English](#) and [French](#).

Until next time, never give up improving!

**JOIN US !**  
February 23 | Noon to 1 p.m.

**Coffee Talk**  
  
**FORUM**

This episode will feature special guest **Charlie Janowicz**, CIMS Account Executive, who will provide an indepth look into the ISSA's industry leading Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS).

**REGISTER NOW!**

## Tackling Employee Turnover with 'Tools of the Trade'

cleaners, there are numerous robotic technologies that your cleaning program can introduce to reduce repetitive tasks for cleaning staff. Look for equipment that is easy to operate and maintain, and uses sensors to safely avoid people and obstacles. Because robots deliver consistent results, they help limit the need for re-cleaning that requires high volumes of cleaners and disinfectants. Additionally, robotic vacuums kick up eight times less dust than manual cleaning, which improves IAQ. Overall, automated machines create safer, more sustainable and more efficient work environments to support employees.

### SAFE AND CONSISTENT CLEANING

For the cleaning industry to attract and retain new talent, demonstrating a

commitment to the health and environmental concerns of these new employees is essential. Numerous technologies, products, and services can make work environments safer, which in turn helps employees focus on consistently providing cleaner facilities for occupants and visitors. When combined with a workplace culture that celebrates cleaning professionals and aligns with their values, these tools of the trade help tackle one of the industry's toughest and costliest challenges: staffing.

— *Bill Koble, Ph.D., is president of PathoSans Technologies, a leading provider of on-site generation (OSG) devices that produce ready-to-use, highly effective cleaners and disinfectants known as electrochemically active (ECA) solutions. Learn more at [www.pathosans.com](http://www.pathosans.com).*

SOURCE: CMM Online

## Big Business HR Hacks: How to Punch Above Your Weight as an SME

about your business and brand goals, then map out all the things you'll need to address in order to get there.

Your HR plan should cover things like keeping employment contracts, legislation and other documentation up to date and be focused on both protecting your business and developing your workforce.

**Hack:** Get professional advice to create an HR plan that's going to deliver to your goals and protect your business from risk. Review and update your HR plan in the lead-up to each new financial year.

### (4) INVEST IN PERFORMANCE

Rather than seeing training as an expense, think about it as a way to enhance productivity, spark innovation and retain valued employees. It's important to be very clear about your broad business objectives and the trackable measurements that show your progress towards reaching these goals. Be strategic about what training you implement so that your employees develop in line with your business needs and you can quickly see the return on your investment.

**Hack:** Think about and document

the critical KPIs for your business. Then develop a training plan that will directly impact the business goals and growth you are pursuing.

### (5) REMOVE THE EMOTION

There's no getting around the 'human' aspect of human resources. As a small business owner or operator, it's easy to view employees as friends and family. There are many benefits to this, but it can also become very difficult to raise issues such as performance problems.

Employees may also feel hurt and victimized by straightforward feedback when the boundaries between professional and personal relationships are blurred. In these cases, having an experienced, impartial person to help address and resolve the issues may be the best way forward.

**Hack:** Sometimes, it's hard to keep a cool head, so bring in an experienced HR professional to help you deal with conflicts and difficult situations when you need the extra support.

— *Melissa Behrend is director of HR On Call.*

SOURCE: InClean Magazine