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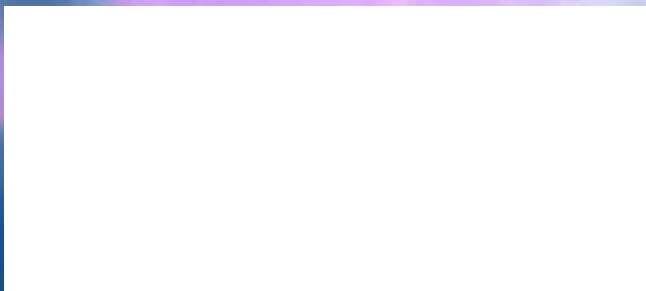


Services

The Magazine for the Building Service Contracting Industry



Green Cleaning



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Services

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The ABC's of Cleaning



The Green revolution in the Jan/San industry is continuing to gather momentum as end users are beginning to realize the benefits of cleaning for health.

When clients request green cleaning services from a building service contractor (BSC), how do they respond?

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the mechanics of providing green cleaning services to facility owners/management.

Everybody is a Winner

The Green revolution represents a win-win situation for all parties involved from facility owners and occupants, janitorial workers, Jan/San distributors, manufacturers, and enterprising building service contractors.

Facility owners/managers/occupants all reap the benefits of a cleaner and healthier facility. Manufacturers and distributors can expand product offerings, offer new innovative productivity enhancing products, and provide educational tools and advice to BSCs on Green cleaning. BSCs can add Green cleaning services to their offering in order to differentiate themselves from the competition and win new business.

Green cleaning confusion

Much of the emphasis on “Green” has been associated with products. Whether the products are Green chemicals, supplies, or equipment, the impression is left that simply using these types of products constitutes a Green cleaning program. This could not be further from the truth.

The proponents of Green cleaning have worked tirelessly to promote the benefits of cleaning for health. In addition, much has been written on how to motivate decision makers and stakeholders to commit to a green cleaning program.

The confusion on Green cleaning seems to be in the nuts and bolts of getting a Green cleaning program started. Green cleaning, like regular cleaning, is a process. The difference is in how this process is conducted: in other words, the “what to do” and “how to do it” part of the process.

The US Green Building Council with their LEED certification program has provided some guidance on how Green cleaning can provide credits toward certification by meeting certain standards. Green Seal has recently

BY MIKE TARVIN

| Green Cleaning Principles |
|--|
| <i>Clean to protect human health first.</i> |
| <i>Minimize human exposure to contaminants and cleaning residues.</i> |
| <i>Make a commitment to education and training.</i> |
| <i>Minimize the amount of pollutants entering a building while maximizing their removal.</i> |
| <i>Schedule all maintenance, emphasize routine maintenance.</i> |
| <i>Ensure worker and building occupant safety at all times.</i> |
| <i>Communicate goals and the benefits of green cleaning.</i> |
| <i>Use chemical products that minimize human and environmental impacts.</i> |
| <i>Take a holistic approach to building maintenance.</i> |

TABLE 1

implemented a standard for cleaning services that details Green cleaning requirements for BSCs that wish to become “Green certified” cleaning contractors. These standards still lack the nuts and bolts of what is green cleaning.

Focus on BSCs

Once the commitment has been made on the part of the facility owner/tenant to implement a Green cleaning program, it often is going to be left to a building service contractor to get it done. This is where the opportunity lies if a BSC knows what to do and how to do it. A BSC that positions himself as a provider of Green cleaning services can

gain a valuable competitive edge. Building service contractors will need to turn to reputable manufacturers and distributors that can provide all the tools to help implement a Green cleaning program. Simply providing products that are considered “Green” is no longer going to be enough!

Manufacturers Play a Key Role

Beyond supplying quality Green cleaning products, some manufacturers have recognized the need to go beyond marketing the products, by providing the additional value-added services related to Green cleaning. This includes Green cleaning implementation

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| Green Cleaning Focal Points | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Entryways | Special attention is given to the point where the bulk of contaminants enter a facility. |
| Hard Floor Care | A maintenance program that emphasizes routine, scheduled maintenance to extend finish life. |
| Carpet Care | A maintenance program that emphasizes routine maintenance to regularly remove trapped contaminants. |
| Efficient Use of Chemicals | A method of insuring that chemicals are diluted properly through a supplied measuring system or device. |
| Restroom Cleaning | A thorough and regularly schedule maintenance program for restrooms. |
| Disinfection | A plan for appropriate use of disinfectants in areas only where needed. |
| Dining and Break Rooms | Addressing these areas where bacteria, odors, and pests can accumulate. |
| Trash Collection and Recycling | A protocol for collection and disposal of trash and general recycling guidelines and policies. |
| Training Requirements | Documented training for all employees on green cleaning procedures. Additional annual training. |
| Communications | Identifying "vulnerable populations" – a building that may be effected by cleaning activities. Feedback mechanisms. |

TABLE 2

manuals that are essential “how-to” cookbooks of sorts targeted to building service contractors. Electronic manuals that allow for streamlining the documentation process of the program with easily customizable forms provides a great benefit to BSCs wanting to supply green cleaning services.

Distributors: Products and Education

Jan/San distributors can play an essential role by providing the right products and providing the educational support that is needed to implement a Green cleaning program. This is where distributors and manufacturers must partner to provide a unified link to efficiently provide the products and knowledge to the building service contractor.

Green Certified BSCs?

The day may be coming where a building service contractor can become a certified “Green cleaning contractor.” The Green Seal organization has upped the ante by creating a new Green cleaning service standard entitled “Green Seal Environmental Standard for Cleaning Services” by which

contractors can become certified.

The real driving force for the adoption of Green cleaning methods will

be the facility owners/tenants that demand Green cleaning services from contractors. Whether they require certification remains to be seen. There





is no doubt that a contractor that understands Green cleaning and proves capable of providing Green cleaning services can gain profitable new business.

The Green Cleaning Process

The process of offering Green cleaning services begins by examining how you conduct services today and adapting to the specifics of a Green cleaning program. Before you get started, one requirement of green cleaning is thorough documentation of the entire process. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) are documents that describe every aspect of your operation from cleaning a toilet to the process of communication with the client.

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| Green Cleaning Checklist | |
|--|---|
| Standard Operating Procedures | SOP's document everything you do from cleaning toilets to maintaining floors to training employees. |
| Green Building Survey | A detailed inspection of all areas of a building relevant to cleaning and recommendations/action plan. |
| Green Cleaning Facility Plan | A comprehensive plan for maintaining a facility. Address focal points, maintenance schedules and reports. |
| Equipment Inspection and Maintenance Logs | Documented quarterly inspection to insure proper operation as well as all maintenance performed. |
| Cleaning Chemical Inventory and Tracking | Quarterly reports of all chemicals within a facility and the usage for the quarter. |
| Employee Training Logs | Documented training for employees on Green cleaning procedures in addition to OSHA mandated training. |
| Occupant Surveys and Feedback | Requesting feedback via survey from facility management and occupants. |

TABLE 3

principles (see Table 1). These guiding principles are broadly defined goals for all green cleaning programs.

Once these principles are understood, a BSC should concentrate on several focal points to help them get started. The "Green cleaning focal points" are specific item-by-item facility maintenance issues that need to be addressed in every Green cleaning facility plan (see Table 2). An SOP document should be created for each of these focal points. Additional SOPs may be required for more specific job functions as well.

Finally, a Green cleaning program has several other requirements as outlined in the checklist (see Table 3). Of particular importance that relates to a specific facility, is a comprehensive Green Building Survey that includes a detailed inspection and follow up action plan. The action plan is addressed in the Green Cleaning Facility Plan, a comprehensive strategy for maintaining the facility. The Green Building Survey and Facility Plan also serve as important tools BSCs can use when communicating with their clients.

Conclusion

Green cleaning represents an opportunity for building service contractors, distributors, and manufacturers to work together and offer a superior way of cleaning and maintaining facilities while benefiting the occupants of a building and the environment.

The Green cleaning process is simply a different way of doing what a BSC already knows. Any BSC can offer Green cleaning services once they attain an understanding of the principles of Green cleaning, addressing Green cleaning focal points, and implementing these principles in their daily work.

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