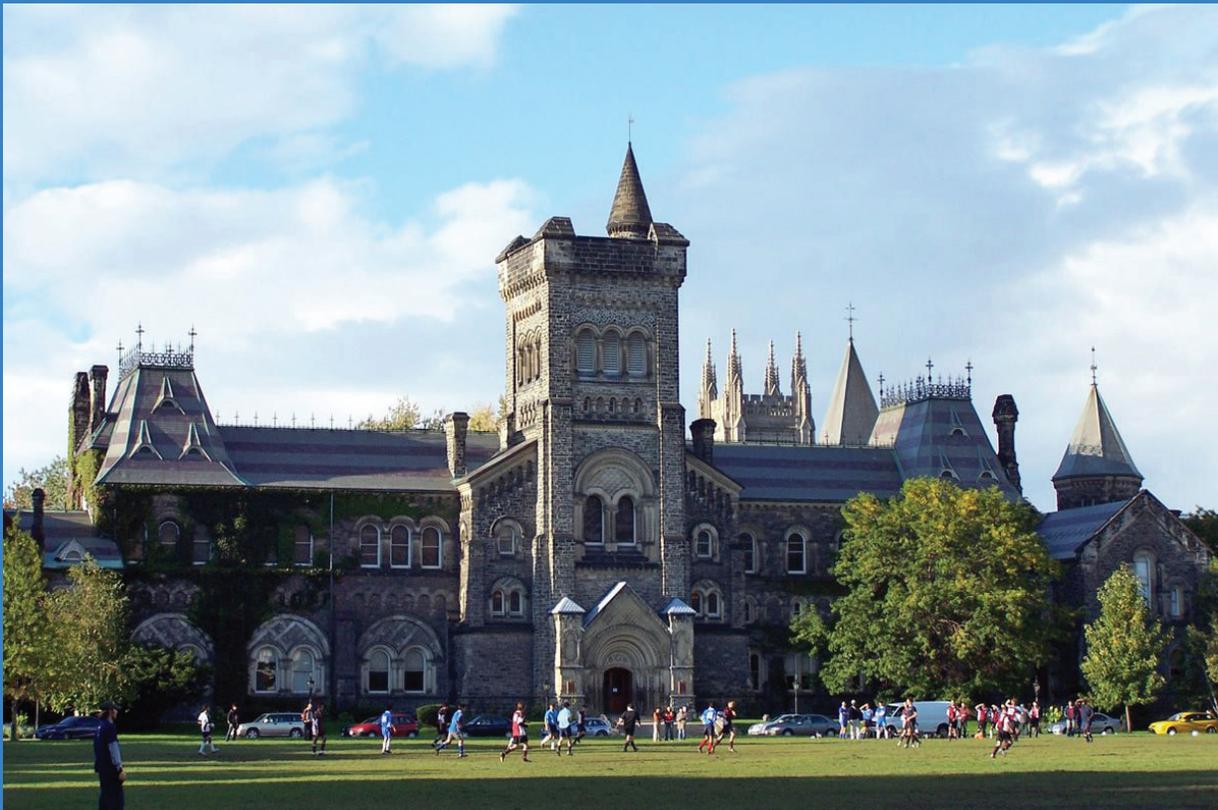


Maximizing Your In-House Cleaning Operations

Eight strategies beyond products, procedures, and protocols to increase your in-house cleaning operation's ROI while ensuring a consistently clean, safe, healthy environment at the lowest overall cost



A Special Report by Mike Sawchuk

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When it comes to making improvements, too many facility management (FM) executives overseeing in-house cleaning operations—especially unionized ones—focus solely on their products, procedures, and protocols. Concentrating on these is a great start and are areas that typically are easy and quick to change.

However, other strategies can have a longer-term, more significant impact on your cleaning operations' ability to deliver consistent clean, safe, and healthy at the lowest overall cost. These other strategies are also poised to bring greater recognition and rewards to FM leaders and their operations.

On the following pages are eight strategies other than the 3Ps (products, procedures, and protocols) that FM executives can use to produce sustainable improvements that get noticed.

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1

Focus on People

On average, for most institutions and venues, cleaning supplies and equipment account for only 10% of the total cost of in-house cleaning. The remaining 90% is the cost of your people—their wages, benefits, pension plans, work restrictions, sick pay, and unforeseen absences.

If a large facility can increase its people's effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, and consistency—and reduce costs caused by inappropriate absences and under-performing employees—it will have a more significant, longer-term impact than switching products or upgrading equipment.



What are your current processes for recruiting, hiring, onboarding, cultivating, coaching, and retaining the best employees possible? How might these processes be improved? Below are some suggestions:

- **Start off right.** No matter how desperate you might feel at the time, avoid hiring people without the proper skillset and attitude.
- **Let go when necessary.** When hiring new employees, do not retain any workers beyond their probationary periods who are not as good—or better—than your current best employees.
- **Train and retrain.** Provide all employees with initial and ongoing training and coaching.
- **Pay fairly.** Workers can't be expected to be happy and perform their best if they are unfairly compensated.
- **Be professional.** Treat employees with respect at all times.
- **Be flexible.** Giving top-performing employees flexibility incentivizes other workers to follow suit to gain similar benefits.
- **Do what it takes.** Work hard to retain your best employees

2

Quality Leadership

Excellent leadership is the other key “people” area that generates a significant return on investment (ROI). This is especially important given the diversity and complexities associated with leading an in-house team. Many in-house custodial staffs have good managers, but not all have competent leaders capable of creating a staff culture of trust, engagement, and empowerment.

Think Like a Mechanic

Picture the workings of your in-house custodial program like those of a car: Products, procedures, and protocols are the body of the vehicle. People are the engine and drive train. The people determine how fast and responsive the car is and how smoothly it operates. However, the key to optimal performance is the caliber of the driver (leaders) and fuel grade (leadership style). These are critical considerations in determining the results of an in-house cleaning operation. The leadership team inspires and motivates, steering the custodial staff in the right direction while inferior fuel leads to inferior performance. The leadership team determines if the race is won or lost.



To “win,” FM executives need to ensure the right leaders are in place. This sounds simple, but as many of you know, it is not so easy in real life.

The good news is, with the right coaching, you can create good leaders. Unlike the fleeting benefits of changing products and protocols, effective leadership will have a significant, long-lasting positive impact on your overall in-house cleaning operations—which reflects well on you.

Qualities of Leaders

Great leaders create the environment necessary for employees to be motivated, engaged, and efficient to produce consistent operational excellence. They set a clear, compelling vision and strategy that is understood and accepted by their entire team. As mentioned previously, good and even great managers are not always great leaders because the two positions can call for different skillsets and characteristics.

Great managers:

- Supervise
- Measure
- Report
- Reward
- Control
- Create operational excellence
- Listen to all stakeholders' perspectives
- Break ties and make decisions as needed.



Great leaders:

- Coach
- Inspire
- Motivate
- Support
- Make workers feel appreciated and know that what they do is important
- Build confidence
- Listen
- Ask questions—and pay attention to the answers
- Communicate openly and transparently
- Ask for input and feedback
- Clarify expectations
- Focus on results, not the means of getting there
- Provide clear, SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, reportable, and on a timeline) goals
- Provide specific, objective feedback—good or bad
- Help reports make decisions
- Make decisions when necessary
- Hold people accountable
- Invest in their people—training and retraining
- Provide required resources to the best of their ability
- Remove or minimize obstacles/roadblocks
- Care about workers and their well-being.

Great leaders are

- Trustworthy
- Ethical
- Humble
- Empathetic
- Respectful
- Appreciative
- Authentic.

Successful FM leaders constantly explore ways to improve themselves, their operations, and their facilities. They are always looking for ways to achieve positive outcomes, enhance effectiveness, increase efficiency and productivity, and boost employee morale and engagement. These are true leaders, who recognize that real change must start with them, and they are not afraid to initiate it and make improvements where necessary.

3

The Outsource Threat

Outsourcing cleaning is a growing trend in schools, colleges, universities, and large venues everywhere. Replacing in-house teams with hired contractors typically occurs when CEOs and VPs of these institutions determine that their cleaning operations can—and should—be outsourced because it will produce improved, verifiable results and greater value for their organizations.

"For facilities with solid leadership that constantly assess and improve their in-house cleaning operations to attain greater efficiencies and improved results, outsourcing will not be considered."

Outsourcing can be expected to produce benefits, such as:

- Lower costs, including:
 - ✓ Labor—wages/overtime, benefits, pensions, employee substitution, sick pay, and vacations
 - ✓ Equipment and supplies
 - ✓ Training and development
 - ✓ Insurance
 - ✓ Workers' compensation claims
- Improved data collection and documentation
- Flexibility—easier and faster to adapt to budget cuts and fire contractors that do not meet expectations
- Cleaner, safer, healthier facilities, whether in reality or perception only.

For facilities with solid leadership that constantly assess and improve their in-house cleaning operations to attain greater efficiencies and improved results, outsourcing will not be considered. Instead, these facilities and their leaders will be recognized.

4

True North: Your Purpose-Vision-Mission

What is the Purpose, Vision, and Mission of your cleaning operation? What are the core values, the guiding principles, your team is expected to live by? Are these vital components in writing? Are they displayed throughout the facility? Does every manager, supervisor, lead, and custodian live and breathe them? Are they all—always—held accountable to uphold them?

If these values are missing or are not the true north that guides every action of each member of the cleaning operations team, there is considerable weakness in the department's foundation. Your entire team must understand and live by these mantras, make all decisions based on them, and be held accountable if they do not follow them. These are the building blocks and the glue that holds the team's culture together and provides clear direction. Without this clarity and focus, excellence is not possible.



5

Information Overload

We live in a time where we are drowning in information while starving for knowledge. The industry information comes from distributors and manufacturers, associations like APPA and ISSA, and organizations like Healthy

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Schools Campaign and Green Seal. This is added to the general information we all receive every day. Being constantly bombarded with information can be overwhelming, leading to anxiety, frustration, and poor—or no—decision-making. Research shows it is far easier for people to make a decision when faced with fewer choices.

Everybody says they have a better product, procedure, and training. How do you know? Whom do you listen to? What should be done and when? What should be ignored? Who can help with the best advice given your specific situation, facility, and contracts?

You have two choices: Master the overload or al-

low it to stagnate decision-making and create the ambiguity that contributes to complacency. The only way to master it, is to have a plan to follow to take you from where you are to where you want to be.

Below are steps you can take to prevent information overload and the ill effects it can have on you and your FM team.

Understand the value of cleaning and the level of clean, safe, and healthy your building occupants are expecting.

- Conduct a comprehensive and integrated assessment of your current situation.
- Determine your precise objectives in detail.
- Create an action plan, including the specific strategies and tactics that will deliver these sustainable objectives.
- Marshal the resources necessary to reach these objectives based on your facility's circumstances, such as priorities and budget.
- Select a single specialist. There are plenty of consultants and coaches who can assist you. Select one who knows the science and engineering of cleaning and cleaning operations and possesses a thorough understanding of all industry segments, including manufacturing, distribution, and contract cleaning as well as in-house operations.
- Work with this specialist to identify and prioritize the processes and protocols required for your cleaning operations to be best-in-class.
- Reap the rewards and recognition for your efforts.

6

Deal With Subpar Employees

How many of the employees in your cleaning operations are inferior performers—5%? 10%? More? How much does this cost your facility?

Let's assume the wages and benefits of each subpar worker is \$40,000. Over 30 years, this adds up to \$1.2 million per employee! Add the costs of covering them when they are absent and the extra labor to redo their unacceptable work, not to mention the physical and mental impact on your other employees. Bad employees bring the whole team's bar down, negatively impacting clean, safe, healthy levels and the bottom line.

Avoiding the \$1.2 Million Mistake

At some point, we have all witnessed how the actions of poor-performing employees can spread, demotivating average, good, and even great employees. Don't accept this.

The best way to deal with bad employees is to deal with them. Don't accept poor performance. Don't permit processes and protocols that lower the standards of 90% of your employees to accommodate the 10% of underperformers. Below are some tips on how to do this.

- ✓ Clearly define the position. As stated earlier, you need to be very clear on the core values/guiding principles of all your people and the purpose of the operations—the north star. If job candidates know what these principles are from the start, understand that they will be held accountable to uphold them, and realize they will be let go if they do not, many will not accept the position or quit.
- ✓ Set expectations. Let all employees know that poor performance and behavior is not acceptable—and will not be tolerated. Don't let any department or group force acceptance of subpar employees.
- ✓ Review process. The best way to avoid subpar or potentially subpar employees is not to bring them on board. Recruiting, hiring, and onboarding must be considered critical steps to prevent \$1.2 million per employee mistakes. Make sure your recruiting and hiring practices are aligned with your core values and guiding principles. Know what skills, attitude, and DNA are required and develop a process to hire only the best.
- ✓ Be discerning. It may not seem possible, especially in times of labor shortages, but this is vital to your success. Don't simply accept who comes or is sent your way. Build the team slowly and manage the process. Your team is one of the most important investments. If you are deliberate about finding, developing, and retaining only the best, it will pay enormous dividends for you, your team, your facility, and your reputation.
- ✓ Don't wait. If a hiring mistake is made, rectify it as soon as the error is realized. As previously stated, new hires should be as good— or better—than your best employees before the end of their probation period. If despite proper onboarding time and training, this is not the case, it won't get better; it will just get harder to let them go. In this case, swift action is best.

7

Prepare for the Next Pandemic

There will be another pandemic. The only question is when. Remember the recent ones, such as SARS and swine flu (H1N1)? Remember how many said, “We learned our lessons, and will adapt and be better prepared for the next”? How many developed and implemented positive, sustainable changes? Did you?

Then COVID-19 hit. It was bad. But what if it was even more contagious? What if more people got sick, and it was even more deadly?

This time, don’t wait. Take the time now to develop a fluid and flexible program for cleaning and disinfecting to protect against the next pandemic. Develop a set of processes and protocols that adjust product selection and usage, tasks, procedures, frequencies, and verification as the threat levels, type of pathogen(s), and transmission paths change.

Most in-house facilities have standard operating procedures (SOPs) and pandemic plan operations (PPOs). Yet facilities, especially large complex ones, need to have programs that fall between these two plans. Using SOPs as a pathogen threat level rises is not enough to ensure a safe and healthy facility. Relying on a PPO when the health threat may be higher than usual but is nowhere near pandemic levels is similarly unwise. It is an ineffective use of resources (product, equipment, and labor). Over and underuse of cleaning and disinfecting resources can also be harmful to building occupants.

Simply doing the same, but more frequently, is not the answer. Targeted and strategic hygiene is needed. Most facilities need at least two levels between SOPs and PPOs and possibly even a third. Below are the five levels of cleaning protocols most in-house custodial operations should be prepared to put in place when the need arises.

- SOPs— Pandemic pathogens pose no threat.
- Level 2—There are threats posed by pandemic pathogens in the country but not in your state/province.
- Level 3—There are threats posed by pandemic pathogens in the state or province but not in your region.
- Level 4—There are threats posed by pandemic pathogens in your region but not in your facilities.
- PPO—There are threats posed by pandemic pathogens in your facility.

Your team must be prepared to adjust the products, procedures, frequencies, verification, and training and retraining for each of the five levels. For example, as the threat level increases, you must be ready to:

- Use disinfectants and sanitizers with higher efficacy and with kill claims for the specific pathogen(s) of concern
- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch points and other areas during times of frequent use when there is a threat from touch
- Avoid reusing cloths and mops, especially for different tasks, to avoid cross-contamination
- Increase verification and reporting levels using solid data reporting
- Use specialized equipment to combat the targeted pathogens (electrostatic sprayers, for example).

Ramp these steps up as threat levels rise and adjust downwards as they recede.

8

Don't Guess, Assess

The goal of constant improvement is crucial given the current heightened awareness of cleaning for health. FM executives must be confident that their operations are aligned with industry best practices. But confidence isn't enough. You need documented proof that your in-house team consistently delivers the cleanest, safest, and healthiest facility possible.

Without this verifiable assurance, you risk subjecting your facility and occupants to an infectious, potentially deadly outbreak. You also risk losing future promotions, or worse, being demoted, fired, or having your cleaning operations outsourced.

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These threats are real and will happen to those who don't know—and can't prove with reliable data—that their cleaning processes, protocols, and overall operations are best-in-class.

Many in-house custodial operations are presumed to be good. Many are good. Some are best-in-class. But how do you know if yours is best-in-class? What if it is not?. What proof do you have?

What data do you have to compare what your team is doing to the top cleaning operations? As the vice president or director of facilities management, you are ultimately accountable to prove your department's effectiveness and efficiency, to deliver outcomes that justify your budget. There's no place for complacency and ambiguity.

A deep-dive assessment is the best way to protect the future of any in-house cleaning operation. As Ronald Reagan said, "Trust but verify." Data doesn't lie.

Assessments are based on data, which, in turn, verifies results. Data can be used to develop an improvement plan that produces long-term sustainable changes that ensure your in-house custodial operations consistently deliver the highest level of clean, safe, and healthy at the lowest overall costs. Assessments build knowledge. They build confidence and verify that your cleaning operation is best-in-class.

Important Note

Dear FM Executive,

I hope my Special Report provided you value. I hope it challenged you to see things differently and to better understand how important it is to know if your cleaning operations are producing the highest level of consistent clean, safe, and healthy at the lowest overall costs.

The eight foundational keys covered in this Special Report are only the beginning. While improving three to five of these areas will produce significant, sustainable positive change, there are more than 100 considerations, of which 30 or so are critical.

For this reason, it is vital to conduct a comprehensive and integrated assessment of your entire cleaning operations. This should include comparing your processes to best practices, so you have the data necessary to help you develop an improvement plan that will drive significant, sustainable, long-term change. Such an assessment will also provide the solid data required to verify all you are doing right and justify your department's existence and expenditures.

If this is important to you, and you want to learn how to conduct such an assessment, or if you have any questions, click here to book an exploratory call with me.

You will learn about a complete blueprint consisting of lessons, an assessment sheet, and weekly Q&A sessions to clarify, verify, and provide any assistance you may need to complete the course that will confirm the success of your cleaning operations.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me at Mike@SawchukConsulting.com; phone, 905-932-650.

Thank you for your efforts in keeping your facility consistently clean, safe, and healthy.



— Mike