

Overdue Attention Given to Cleaning

Are we cleaning for health or for appearance?

By Steve Lewis

Over the past year, largely due to COVID, people have become increasingly interested in cleaning. The pandemic has fostered a heightened awareness of different products available and the cleaning methods necessary to achieve optimum results. It has been refreshing to see more businesses, and even the public, take an interest in the janitor industry.

I am sure many of you are just like me, and at some point, you have had someone ask you what you do for a living. When your follow-up response was, "I work in the cleaning industry," they got a blank stare on their face and said, "Oh, that's nice," and that is precisely where the conversation ended. Lately, however, I have noticed a shift in attitudes regarding our industry. When I mention I am involved in the cleaning industry now, people's ears perk up and then come the questions. This added attention and focus on our industry is great, and some might even say it is long overdue. Still, we must proceed with caution when answering questions concerning processes used to keep various types of buildings clean.

As an industry, it is essential we are all on the same page and offer consistent information based on decades of knowledge that can't be "googled." Our experience in this industry has taught us there isn't a one-size-fits-all answer when it comes to cleaning, and the correct answers will be based on many different variables involved with each specific cleaning task.

Recently, a reporter quoted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC) as stating there was no need to disinfect surfaces, to "just use soap and water," and it's all good. While this might be true for a single dwelling home with very few people and no COVID-19 cases, again, this isn't the one-size-fits-all answer people should blindly follow when establishing cleaning procedures. After all, I don't know of anyone who wishes to be admitted to a health care facility that doesn't use disinfectants in their cleaning processes. I also don't think we should recommend things like getting on a subway that doesn't regularly disinfect touch points or sending our children to schools that refuse to establish any type of disinfection protocol. On the other hand, we should be careful of over-cleaning and disinfecting everything to the point of being wasteful, which will increase cleaning costs unnecessarily.

Several accreditation programs are available for those who have questions regarding best practices and are interested in partnering with outside sources for some added professional help.

A few examples are: Outcome Based Cleaning™ (OBC™), Partners in Protection (PIP), and GBAC STAR™. These programs establish step-by-step proce-

dures for each facility designed to attain the level of cleaning necessary to reach accreditation.

As an industry, if we stay consistent with our message, our knowledge and expertise will be invaluable in the

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challenge of helping facilities achieve a healthy and safe environment for everyone. 🏠



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