

A MINDSET SHIFT: CLEANING FOR CONFIDENCE

Five key considerations for inspiring confidence in the cleanliness of your facilities

As guidelines continue to change and eager patrons, employees and students return, facilities of all types – from commercial offices and retailers, to schools and universities – are recognizing that the **cleanliness and safety** of spaces plays a much bigger role in shaping public perceptions. People that used to walk into a restroom and consider, “Does it look and smell clean?” are now wondering, “How recently has it been disinfected?” **Every facility needs to focus on inspiring confidence in those entering – and this requires a bit of a mindset shift: from cleaning for appearance to cleaning for confidence.**



Heightened awareness for public health risks of all types

Our collective awareness of public health risks lurking in everyday places increased over the past year. An Ernst & Young consumer survey found that 7 in 10 people say they're more aware of hygiene and sanitation in businesses. That awareness goes well beyond the most recent pandemic; we all know more about how pathogens like the flu, norovirus, MRSA and even rhinoviruses that cause the common cold can be spread within enclosed spaces. In turn, expectations for facility cleanliness are higher. Organizations of all types stepped up hygiene protocols in the past year, and Ecolab research shows consumers want to see as much or more cleaning and disinfection continuing even after COVID-19 vaccines are widely distributed¹.



Cleaning for public health and safety

For most organizations, cleanliness has traditionally been more focused on the perception of clean: Does the space look clean? Does it smell clean? These visual and olfactory cues have served as reliable (often subconscious) cues to the cleanliness of a facility. But today, we all know more than ever that looks can be deceiving when it comes to cleanliness. Organizations and facilities of every type – as well as their inhabitants – have become increasingly literate in overall environmental hygiene. We all see cleanliness as more directly connected to health and safety in the spaces and places we live, play, shop, learn and work.

FIVE KEY CONSIDERATIONS

As organizations make a permanent shift to cleaning for health and safety

- 1 Achieve a science-based clean**

Clean can have many meanings. But today, heightened public understanding of the science of cleaning means that facilities need to go beyond the basic aesthetic elements. Earning the confidence of patrons, students and/or employees means delivering a science-based clean that consistently kills pathogens like influenza, norovirus, SARS CoV-2 and rhinovirus, the virus that causes the common cold. Partnering with a cleaning company with deep subject matter expertise in environmental hygiene will ensure you've implemented a robust and comprehensive cleaning program built with science-backed products and procedures that can help you achieve the kind of science-based clean you need to earn and keep customer confidence.
- 2 Ensure adherence to processes and cleaning protocols**

You need to verify your team is following the directions for use on the product label to help ensure cleaning effectiveness – and confirm they are using products on the surfaces for which they were formulated (i.e., hard vs. soft/upholstered surfaces, food contact vs. non-food contact surfaces, etc.) Your chemical supplier should be able to partner with you to provide education and training for your team on best practices to deliver consistent results, drive operational efficiency and delight your building occupants.
- 3 Re-examine and simplify staff training**

One of the biggest barriers to “right-way” cleaning is training. In many organizations, cleaning team members receive robust training during initial onboarding – but little ongoing education to reinforce or supplement this initial training. As cleaning requirements expand and grow more complex, organizations should be re-examining their staff training programs to help ensure they're using the right products in the right way. With rising labor costs and staff shortages putting pressure on cleaning teams, it can be hard to find the time for ongoing staff training. Fortunately, some leading cleaning chemical vendors can provide supplemental staff training and educational resources – including convenient online, on-demand resources and videos available for staff, as well as on-site training when needed.
- 4 Seek out innovative cleaning solutions to add efficiency**

Cleaning for confidence may ultimately raise the standards for what is required of cleaning teams. Innovations in cleaning chemistry have created unique products that can help your cleaning team complete more rigorous cleaning requirements – more efficiently. Look for disinfectants and sanitizers with best-in-class contact times, enabling your team to confidently kill dangerous pathogens more quickly. Leveraging multi-purpose products can help achieve cleaning and sanitization/disinfection in a single step saving your staff significant time. Application methods can also help to drive efficiency. Consider electrostatic sprayers to more efficiently and effectively apply approved disinfectants in areas that can be cleaned without others present or formats like wipes to provide a convenient, user-friendly solution.”
- 5 Consider a program with cleaning verification**

The danger of pathogenic organisms is that they are microscopic – much too small to see with the human eye. Similarly, even if you do follow proper cleaning procedures, your customers can't see that all pathogens have been killed. So how do you inspire confidence? The truth is that appearances are still critical. First impressions on how a space looks and smells will drive behaviors – and **85% of people say it's important that they see visible signs of cleaning.**

People also trust expertise – and **2 in 3 consumers say they want businesses to “prove” their commitment to health and safety through an independent audit.** This is why more organizations are turning to independent cleaning verification service partners to help ensure their cleaning protocols are following best practices and are effective for their specific cleaning needs. Service partners can also help verify that you are using the right products and processes to help establish and maintain a consistent clean.

Cleaning for confidence drives wide-ranging business value

The reality is that cleaning for confidence may present a shift in staff priorities and your overall operations, but it's a worthwhile investment as heightened customer expectations are here to stay. In fact, 95% of consumers say they'll still want to see as much – or even more – cleaning and sanitation post-vaccine. And as Deloitte warns, cleaning for confidence is a “make it or break it” challenge: “it either leads to increased trust or no trust at all.”

Moreover, cleaning with public health in mind is a worthy investment that delivers business value in several other ways too, as most organizations compete on user experience and people increasingly seek out value-drive organizations that align with their values:

- **Prioritizing staff health and wellness can help reduce the costs of absenteeism, enhance staff satisfaction, improve retention and mitigate the high costs of turnover.**
- **Cleaning for confidence can elevate your user experience to enhance your brand and build your reputation.**
- **Demonstrating your commitment to cleaner, safer spaces shows that your organization values responsible business practices, which people value – from promoting the wellness of your staff and guests, to helping to build cleaner, safer spaces.**



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1. "Post-Vaccine Consumer Attitude Study," January 5, 2021 (paid for by Ecolab)