

## Why is it so hard to find decent janitorial help?

Although there are numerous reasons for the high dissatisfaction with area janitorial and maintenance staffs, we will focus on three areas: early contact problems, a lack of understanding about WHY work is performed, and how office habits may contribute to a less clean environment. When contact is made between the customer and service provider sometimes there is a failure to have what in legal terms is called a "meeting of the minds". Customers occasionally tend to understate the scope and expectations of the work while the building service provider or BCS often thinks "What is the most we can charge for the least amount of time"? This will lead to a lack of understanding from the outset. As customers, be wary of contracts that are vague with words that are hard pin down like "daily vacuuming of traffic areas" and have long lists of services performed that would make cleaning unwieldy or unlikely. Tell the service provider exactly what you want.

A lack of training or differing backgrounds can lead to customer unhappiness. Often an employee of the BCS will know WHAT to do but not WHY it is done. The "Why" is far more important! For example, some think the reason why vacuuming is done is to pick up fodder on the carpet that will be noticed the next morning. So they vacuum. The real reason for vacuuming is that 80% of all carpet soils are dry and need to be vacuumed away to keep the carpet clean and unworn for the longest amount of time. By giving the carpets a thorough vacuum each night these soils will be removed AND the noticeable fodder will be picked up too. This problem can be avoided by asking questions of the service provider about how the company keeps up with the latest technologies and chemicals and how they are implemented or asking what sort of maintenance schedule is kept on the equipment and who performs the checks. Unsatisfactory answers to these types of questions may mean that a basic lack of understanding about the process of cleaning exists.

The final area that may lead to a less than satisfactory experience might be that the janitor spends too much time doing things that are not really cleaning and not enough time looking for the same service details that the customer expects. Generally, a janitor will expect to do light cleaning over a large amount of square footage while the house cleaning we are all familiar with is usually the opposite. Office habits can contribute to too much time spent on things other than cleaning. Think: Do we often overload the trash and leave boxes to be disposed of unbroken down? Do we make a lot of mess with our coffee and food outside of areas designed for food and drink? The more time the janitor has to spend doing things that make their job longer the less time they will have to look after the details you have come to expect.

With just a little effort and communication by the customer or service provider in any of the these areas satisfaction levels can rise dramatically!