

Many people believe that if it looks clean and users aren't complaining, then it must be adequately clean. And if this is adequate, then we should focus on decreasing cleaning costs.

Cleaning costs can be reduced by purchasing cheaper and more aggressive chemicals, less efficient vacuums and other equipment, eliminating chemical dispensing equipment and reducing the frequencies of cleaning, dusting and vacuuming. However in reducing cleaning costs we may actually be decreasing occupant productivity—a poor business trade-off.

Few building owners or managers equate cleaning to health or productivity. Yet many organizations, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and

the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), have all linked cleaning's impact to indoor air quality problems and health and productivity. These numbers are startling.

BOMA quantifies the lost productivity due to poor indoor air at 18% annually. And EPA made the clear connection between poor air quality and cleaning and quantified the impacts at \$60 billion of lost productivity and in the hundreds of billions of dollars when the associated health care costs were included.

It has now been proven that thorough cleaning can reduce air particles, volatile organic compounds and biologicals and have a direct and dramatic impact on health and worker productivity.

An informed building owner or man-

ager can use this information to give them a competitive advantage leading to increased success in today's highly competitive business environment.

By Stephen P. Ashton, Rochester Midland Corp., "The Financial Case for Cleaning"

CLEANING AND HEALTH

Billions of dollars in productivity are lost in Canada due to indoor air quality problems in office buildings.

According to the World Health Organization, 30 percent of buildings worldwide generate excessive indoor air quality complaints. Statistics Canada tells us that childhood asthma nearly quadrupled between 1984 and 1995. Asthma now accounts for more lost school days than even the common cold.

Both the problem itself and awareness of the problem are growing rapidly. Proof of this is the sudden presence of litigation in our already beleaguered courts: employees suing employers and building owners for substandard air quality and its related health conditions.

British Columbia, constantly our nation's leader in environmental change, introduced legislation in April of 1998 that brings added responsibility to the building owner/operator to supply quality indoor air or face stiff new financial penalties.

It is now accepted that how we clean has a dramatic effect on the air quality of a building. By focusing our housekeeping practices to reduce dust levels, volatile

CLEANLINESS AND GODLINESS

Cleanliness may be next to Godliness, but while cleaning is recognized as an important club function, we measure cleaning only in the most simplistic of terms: the number of complaints about smelly bathrooms, full garbage cans and unvacuumed carpets.



organic compounds and biologicals, we can have a dramatic impact on health and worker productivity.

By Paul D. Woolfrey, vice-president, Rochester Midland Corp

HEALTH, FITNESS AND CLEANLINESS

The above authors are distinguished experts in facility environments. While the studies they reference have no specific connection to fitness facilities, the research clearly suggests that fitness facility managers should be concerned about their state of indoor air quality and the presence of indoor pollutants.

We asked the following questions to several club and fitness centre managers.

1. How important is cleanliness and hygiene in your operation?

2. What steps do you take to keep things clean and sterile?

We rank cleanliness and hygiene in our operation very high—probably a 10—and we take great pride in people telling us that our facility is one of the cleanest they have seen.

Some steps we have taken to keep things clean and sterile are:

- collaborate with our cleaning company to develop a cleaning schedule (i.e. what needs to be cleaned daily, weekly monthly etc.) to meet the needs of our membership.
- ensure their products comply with WHMIS regulations and are appropriate for our facility.
- remain in constant communication with the cleaning staff re deficiencies reported to us by our members and what our staff sees and ensure that follow-up takes place.

*Doug Weaver, general manager
Fitness 101, Fanshawe College
London, Ontario*

Cleanliness rates 10!! It is so important to me to have the club spotless. This is what I believe sets us apart (as well as our friendliness).

We employ a full-time cleaner who disinfects showers, toilets and floors nightly with an antibacterial/antifungal spray. During the day, staff do hourly checks of the washrooms and spray down showers at this time. We have installed a bacterial hand gel dispenser for members and staff to use. Club equipment is wiped down nightly with a special antibacterial/antiviral wipe. We have antibacterial towelettes so members

can wipe down equipment after each use.

Our member policies include a statement about cleanliness and club etiquette. I believe that we need to educate and train staff so they can educate our members about proper etiquette. If the club is kept spotless, then members know we care and will follow our lead.

We also ask that every member remove their street shoes before entering the club

*Dorothy Slocum
Muskoka Fitness
Bracebridge, Ontario*

Iwould say it's the most important priority after sales. We have always made cleaning a top priority starting with 3x daily spraying of equipment to weekly cleaning



of everything, even the rubber baseboards. We have a daily log that is initialed by staff to be sure nothing has been missed. We also spray handles and equipment with an antibacterial spray.

You can tell a gym's cleanliness by taking a quick glance at the corners of the flooring and the bases of equipment; those hard to clean areas would be a client's first clue to whether or not a club makes cleanliness a priority.

*Joanna Dunn
Fitness Edge Health Club Ltd.
Abbotsford B.C.*

On a scale of 1 to 10, I would score cleaning as a 12. Cleanliness is a top priority for us. It not only reflects on our image, but it is also important for ensuring the safety of our members.

Floors are cleaned every hour. Our equipment is wiped clean twice per day by staff. Spray bottles with disinfectant are available so that members can clean equipment before and after each use. As well, towels are provided for members to place on equipment that they are using.

I'm glad you are focusing some attention on this issue. We are doing well in terms of keeping our facility clean but are always looking for ways to improve.

*Darren Katz, General Manager
Body + Soul Fitness Corp., Toronto*

We give cleanliness an extremely high priority. We have bottles of environmentally friendly cleaner (and rags) for members and guests to wipe down equipment with after use.

Each customer is given a hand towel and/or shower towel when checking in.

Our attendants follow a cleaning schedule for every shift. Some areas are cleaned on a daily basis (i.e. change rooms, showers and toilets), others are cleaned on a weekly basis (i.e. pool mats, windows, etc). The following day, copies of the cleaning checklists are submitted to me and the GM of our hotel.

We have an automated chlorinating system for the pool and hot tub. A manual check is performed twice a day to ensure the automated system is working. Every week, a sample of water is given to the local health authority for analysis. FBC

*Guy Bushell, Manager/Personal
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