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[Cleaning for Students](#)

**Many of us have heard the expression "cleaning for health." It is a term made famous by Dr. Michael Berry, a professor at the University of North Carolina and the author of what is often termed the "bible" of the cleaning industry, *The Built Environment: Cleaning for Health*, published in 1994. However, the cleaning-for-health movement actually started more than 200 years ago in England. This was at a time when boarding houses, schools, school dormitories, prisons and other facilities that accommodated or housed large numbers of people for set periods of time became breeding grounds for fast-moving diseases.**

**Trying to alleviate the problem, administrators soon realized that improved cleaning and maintenance could help deter or prevent the spreading of disease, helping to keep those using these facilities healthy. They learned, as we know now, that there is a direct correlation between proper cleaning and the health of the indoor environment. In fact, in his book, Berry says these administrators, just like those today, realized that "there are no sick buildings, only sick people**

**in mismanaged buildings."**

**In today's environment, proper cleaning and maintenance, along with helping to prevent the spread of disease in settings such as schools, can also provide them with a marketing edge. A system of cleaning that enhances the well-being of students, staff and others in a school can act as a marketing magnet, drawing to it more students interested in attending these educational facilities along with their parents' eager approval.**

### **PROPER CLEANING = STUDENTS**

**Schools and universities, along with educational associations and similar groups, have conducted scores of surveys to determine what students and their parents look for when selecting an educational facility. Of course, curriculum is important. Sports, social activities, honors programs, the chance to do research with faculty members and other programs not only lure students to a college, but also help keep them there. This also encourages many students to complete their post-graduate studies in the same school as well.**

**But these are not the only factors or issues that attract and retain students. According to a study conducted by a private college in Southern California, some of the other major considerations students and parents have when choosing a school include:**

**The geographic location of the school The school's reputation for quality education, instructors and departments The variety and types of classes offered The cost as compared to other schools The school's cleanliness and appearance**

**Cleanliness and appearance are often associated with personal values. A clean, well-maintained school suggests a facility that is well-run, disciplined and healthy, with a school environment conducive to success and achievement — all qualities that reflect positively on those attending and working in these schools. And, since this study indicates that students, along with their parents, shop for schools and universities based on the institution's appearance, putting more funding and attention into cleaning and maintenance may prove to be a good marketing strategy for astute school administrators. It can help them differentiate their school from competing institutions, as well as solidify the school's positive image with current as well as future students and staff.**

### **CUSTODIAN AS SCHOOL SALESPERSON**

**According to Berry, professional cleaners should be viewed as the "managers" of the indoor environment. So it is with the school's custodians that educational facilities must start their marketing program. One of the first ways to**

**accomplish this is to emphasize with the school custodial staff just how important cleaning is to the school.**

**This message must also be accompanied by proper training and education in cleaning tasks. This not only encourages workers to keep a facility looking good, protecting the health of those that use it, but helps sell the school as well. Just as hiring a well-sought-after instructor or adding a new curriculum can add marketable value to a school, an enthusiastic, well-trained cleaning staff adds value and as such, their work must be viewed as a potential marketing tool. Along with adequate training, custodians must be equipped with the proper tools and supplies. Some educational facilities that view cleaning only as an "expense" are often quick to select less-expensive, conventional cleaning tools and equipment. They are also often slow to adopt new cleaning technologies, which can actually improve cleaning and enhance worker productivity and efficiency, all of which makes the school more marketable.**

**Indeed, some studies indicate that the potential financial benefits of improving indoor environments by using newer, more-effective cleaning technologies and systems can exceed costs considerably. And, some schools are learning this firsthand.**

**At one large Midwestern university, the school was caught between a desire to attract more students through enhanced cleaning and serious financial constraints, forcing it to reduce custodial operating budgets. To tackle the situation, the school incorporated a form of "specialist cleaning" system to help improve cleaning and worker productivity.**

**To help maintain its scores of restrooms and locker rooms in a more efficient manner with fewer workers, the school switched from "down on your hands and knees cleaning" to a no-touch cleaning system. This "spray-and-vac" cleaning system can reduce the time it takes to clean a restroom by as much as two-thirds, according to the latest industry studies.**

**The result: according to the school's director of custodial services, incorporating the new cleaning systems has not only helped the school cope with the loss of a large portion of its cleaning personnel, but also improved the school's overall appearance, making it more marketable and helping it attract more students.**

#### **SALES TRAINING STARTS WITH A WALKING TOUR**

**Conducting a walking tour of the school's facilities is one of the best ways to see how marketable a school's appearance is. Some schools have formed focus groups — usually made-up of facility administrators, cleaning personnel, teachers, and students — just to perform this task.**

**The tour should include classrooms, offices, restrooms, locker rooms, residence halls, cafeterias, parking lots, trash receptacles and walkways. The group should try to view the school as a first-time visitor. Among the issues to be explored:**

**Are floors clean and shiny? Are carpets clean? Are parking lots and walkways clean? Are windows, door windows, awnings and other areas clean? Do mats greet visitors at major entries? Entry mats not only help prevent moisture, dust and dirt from entering a facility, but say "we care about keeping our buildings safe and sanitary."**

**Along with the tour of the facilities, janitorial closets should be opened and the cleaning equipment found inside analyzed. Are there high-quality cleaning tools? Is the school taking advantage of the latest in cleaning technologies? Are tools and equipment well-maintained and in good working order? The type of equipment used and how well it is maintained is often a very good reflection of how well the school is cleaned.**

**This walking tour can determine what areas of a facility may need more cleaning attention and, once corrected, help schools take advantage of cleaning as a marketing tool. Enhanced cleaning and cleaning processes improve the health and appearance of the facilities as well as the efficiency and productivity of the cleaning staff, creating an overall winning marketable opportunity.**

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