



# News of Interest

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## **Survey: Green Carpet Cleaning**

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A June 2007 survey questioned carpet cleaning professionals on a variety of issues regarding Green carpet cleaning, carpet cleaning equipment, programs that “approve” hot-water extractors, and how they make purchasing selections.

Conducted by AlturaSolutions Communications, e-mail invitations were sent to more than 3,000 carpet cleaners asking them to take the survey, with 884 answering some or all of the questions asked. All responses were tabulated in the final count.

One of the questions asked the carpet cleaners if they were aware of the Carpet and Rug Institute’s Seal of Approval (SOA) program that evaluates the effectiveness and performance of carpet extractors. More than 80 percent indicated that they were aware of the program. However, approximately 80 percent said that they believed their customers were unaware of the SOA program.

About a quarter of the respondents said that more of their customers are asking if the chemicals and products used to clean their carpets are Green. The rest indicated there has been no “new” interest in environmentally preferable products among their customers, or at least they have not noticed it.

### *Pay for the Gold?*

The overwhelming majority of respondents, nearly 85 percent, were aware that if a carpet extractor has received SOA approval, it means the machine has been tested and proven to be more effective at

cleaning carpets, has improved moisture recovery, and/or can help reduce cleaning times and labor costs.

Aware of these benefits, the respondents were then asked if SOA approval affected their purchasing decisions. For instance:

- When asked if they would select an SOA extractor over a conventional machine even if it cost a bit more, 36 percent said yes; 23 percent said no; 41 percent indicated they were not sure.
- Asked if they were willing to pay a bit more for an extractor that has earned the gold label, the highest ranking possible in the SOA program, 38 percent said yes; 22 percent said no; 40 percent indicated they were not sure.

According to Steve Williams, senior vice president of research and development at U.S. Products, manufacturers of professional carpet, floor, and restoration equipment, most manufacturers in the industry are seeing increased demand for SOA-approved extractors.

“Hopefully, the public will also realize that this program benefits them because it helps them select the proper carpet cleaning equipment that can clean carpets effectively and protect their carpet investment,” he says.

Williams adds that it is likely the SOA program, which is less than a few years old, is still too new for many outside of the industry to be familiar with it. “But like Green cleaning, we can expect it to acquire considerably more attention in the years to come,” he says.