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Industry Trends

Or Get Crushed By The Swell

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Informed speculation about the future of the JanSan industry.



These past few years have been a tumultuous time for businesses.

Whether you've turned the tide into record-setting profits or merely clung to your comfortable business practices long enough to witness a plateau, much can be learned from your industry cohorts.

Green Is The New Normal

Green and sustainable are no longer buzzwords used to differentiate a contemporary company from one viewed as antiquated; rather, they permeate all facets of the JanSan industry.

The environmentally preferable mindset is, in some form or another, present in everything from tools, chemicals and equipment, to workloading techniques and payment options.

According to a survey by TerraChoice Environmental Marketing, 28 percent of organizations now have contracts requiring the use of green chemicals and equipment.

Though it is not yet all-encompassing, this is a major advancement from the single-digit figures present just a few short years ago.

A major contributor to the green trend are local, state and federal procurement policies mandating sustainable practices.

Each year, increasing numbers of municipalities push for green legislation — and the trend is not likely to lose steam any time soon.

"There is more need to be certified, more need for green cleaning and more need for technology — all of which help to increase sustainability," says Suzanne Garvin, director of marketing for CleanTelligent Software Inc. "David Houle, futurist and trend advisor said, 'Companies that do not do something different by the end of this year will be left behind.'"

Operating sustainably is not only trendy and profitable; it is simply the right thing to do.

According to Bill Slezak, director of national accounts segment marketing for Rubbermaid

Commercial Products LLC, there are three Ps of sustainability: People, planet and profit.

All three pieces must work in accord for the movement to be successful and lasting — and all signs point to its ever-present continuity.

Complete Solutions

"In order to remain relevant in a changing market, companies must sell complete solutions instead of just products," notes Ed Lonergan, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of Diversey Inc.

Frontline workers demand convenience, and manufacturers are responding by offering products and equipment formulated and designed to work in harmony with one another.

Not only does using a manufacturer's complete solution ensure more consistent, productive results for end-users, it makes product purchasing more intuitive for managers and supervisors.

Just as increasing numbers of manufacturers are offering complete solutions with their product offerings, more service providers than ever before are offering their customers a one-stop solution to their gamut of cleaning and maintenance needs.

"We basically do everything, and what we can't do we subcontract out," asserts Terry Zastrow, owner of Zastrow Building Maintenance Company Inc. "These services include changing and recycling light bulbs, moving furniture, completing preventative maintenance on equipment, etc. I send staff for specialized training when we see a class that will meet our needs. The upside of the add-on services is the increased revenue. The downside is that it can be a 24/7 job."

Another way manufacturers, companies and organizations are making complete solutions a reality is through joint ventures.

Collaborations and partnerships allow businesses with complementary products and services to supplement one another to

better satisfy their clientele and offer customers more exhaustive solutions to the problems they face.

The JanSan industry is also witnessing increasing amounts of research in the form of co-sponsored surveys and studies to gauge the needs of the end-users, supervisors and others in charge of purchasing products and ensuring the smooth operation of companies and facilities.

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According to Ying Zhang, senior product manager of hard surface cleaning for Rubbermaid Commercial Products LLC, there is a "void of knowledge" on many levels in our industry, which leads to a "lack of respect" for end-users by many in upper management positions.

The insight gained from industry

research and the best practice solutions implemented as a result of the information is helping to close the gap of recognition, which allows individuals of all ranks to work collectively to better provide the solutions our industry demands.

Price Is Still King

"No matter how great a new product may be or how much time and effort it can save you, price is still the deciding factor," declares Teresa Ward, owner of Teresa's Family Cleaning.

Interestingly, a recent survey by SCA Tissue North America found that 62 percent of businesses would be willing to spend more money for greener, more effective products.

However, looking at that statistic from another angle reveals that nearly half of those questioned are concerned about price more than sustainable performance.

Many times, if a return on investment is not quickly realized, it is viewed as an unnecessary expense.

The reality may be that a higher amount is paid upfront for a cost savings to be had in the future through extended use of a product.

That same product may also save money in the long run by consuming less water, energy, time, etc., but an increased price for a product is often difficult to justify.

Price is also a large factor when it comes to training and educational endeavors.

"One of the easiest, low-cost and most impactful steps you can take for better, greener cleaning practices is to make sure that your staff is well-trained," explains Chris Vuturo, external relations manager for Procter & Gamble Professional. "Be sure your staff understands which product to use for each area and problem and show them how to be efficient using the right amount of product with the proper technique to get the job done."

While a vast majority of those in our industry realize the importance and value of learning the newest and most effective workloading and product application techniques, tightening budgets restrict many from fully investing in the success of such activities.

Moreover, some feel that they can already effectively clean and maintain the

buildings in which they work, so why spend additional dollars for someone else to tell them how to perform their job.

Another intriguing aspect stemming from the price issue is the prevalence of outsourcing.

Countless news articles are written daily that outline how school districts, government facilities and even privately-owned buildings are getting rid of their in-house

custodial staff and opting to outsource or privatize their janitorial tasks.

While the current service may be acceptable and the employees cordial, a significant cost savings can be had from outsourcing.

Anybody can attempt to predict upcoming trends, but just as Lynn Krafft, CEO of Krafft Cleaning Service Inc., proclaims, "As with the weather, only time will tell." *CM*

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