

For Sanitary Maintenance

Sell the Benefits – Green Solutions

Most janitor distributors are concerned about the economic downturn and how it might affect their businesses. Along with this, they are wondering what impact it will have on the Green cleaning movement, which has grown dramatically in the past few years.

During economic downturns, many facility managers and end users are reluctant to make any changes, especially if they believe they might cost them more money.

Unfortunately, one area that is often passed over is switching to environmentally preferable cleaning products, because many still believe that these products cost more than conventional products, although for the most part they are cost-neutral.

As to how a difficult economy will affect Green cleaning, the answer is simply that only time will tell. However, at this time, it does not appear there has been any impact, and many Green cleaning experts believe the use of environmentally preferable products will continue to grow, and grow substantially.

A recent survey by the Ashkin Group, a leading advocate for the use of environmentally preferable cleaning products in the professional cleaning industry, provided some insights into this issue.

Approximately 5,000 facility managers, manufacturers, distributors, and end users were asked if they believe the slowing economy would also slow their interest in selecting environmentally preferable cleaning products.

Among the findings:

- Sixty-two percent of the respondents believe that the slowing economy might make private businesses hesitant to select Green products, but most believe that this decrease will be offset by increased purchases from the government, education, and health care sectors.
- The majority of respondents did express some concern about the *rate* of Green adoption, but the majority did not believe any slowdown would be of major consequence and would again likely be offset by government purchasing.
- Most of the manufacturers surveyed indicated they do not believe a slowing economy will affect the amount of resources, engineering, or time their companies commit to developing Green cleaning products; the majority say they do not plan to stop having products Green-certified due to the economic slowdown.
- Fifty-four percent of the distributors surveyed reported that they would “more actively promote” the benefits of Green over conventional products.

The Solutions Package

When selling Green cleaning products in these hard economic times, jansan distributors should put a much greater emphasis on the benefits, what are sometimes referred to as the “solutions package” that Green products

offer end users. We now have several studies reporting that test scores and student performance and attendance are all enhanced in those school facilities that are Green and use environmentally preferable cleaning products.

Similarly, several studies report that when Green cleaning is introduced into offices, there is increased satisfaction among staff, improved morale, reduced absenteeism, and increased worker productivity and efficiency.

One study even reported that Green cleaning, along with other environmentally responsible measures, may translate into an annual productivity gain of \$30 billion to \$150 billion for employers.* Further, businesses that become more environmentally responsible indicate that they can use their "Greenness" as a marketing tool to attract more customers.

The critical message for distributors that plan to grow their Green sales and market share is to present environmentally preferable products as solutions—promoting human health, increase in productivity and performance, and sustainability.

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