

If someone told you that with a minor operational adjustment you could save money, significantly reduce turnover, improve tenant satisfaction and reduce your environmental footprint, would you do it?

While it may sound like a “too good to be true” scenario, it’s worth noting that daylight cleaning is commonplace throughout much of Europe and Canada and is just now being integrated into many U.S. building programs. Facility managers who have integrated the process into their operations have noted a positive effect on their business from an environmental, personnel and bottom-line perspective. For many industry professionals,

daylight cleaning is not only the logical next step to improving the sustainability of their operations, it is a solid business practice.

Empowering people, improving communities

The average turnover rate for cleaning staff is around 70 percent and can be as high as 400 percent in some departments. To train and replace a contracted or in-house cleaning employee costs an organization approximately 25 to 200 percent of the position’s salary. This makes retention programs well worth the investment.

By switching to daylight cleaning, organizations empower cleaning workers by allowing them to reclaim time with their families or spouses. Most cleaning staff are women, so daylight cleaning helps eliminate any anxiety they may have regarding their safety while driving or walking to and from work at night. As a result, their job satisfaction increases and they tend to feel more valued.

Aside from increasing worker satisfaction and reducing turnover, there is a social component to enabling people to spend time with

Daylight Cleaning:

Are You Willing to Make the Move?

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their families in the evenings. According to a *U.S. News & World Report* article¹, a family that eats together stays together. Daylight cleaning gives workers that opportunity. As a result, it is also a way to help strengthen local communities.

The interaction between cleaning staff and building occupants sometimes also yields unexpected benefits. When cleaners are visible throughout the day, they have more interaction with building occupants. This can help improve relationships between cleaning staff and tenants, as well as reduce cleaning-related complaints. In addition, tenants may feel more confident that their areas are kept clean and are properly maintained. Fewer thefts and open doors are also reported, increasing employees' sense of security.

Reduced energy consumption

With the impact of the mortgage crisis and the current economy, cost plays a factor in nearly every corporate decision. As a result, many facility managers are reluctant to make an investment without any long-term financial benefit. Any daylight cleaning installation unequivocally shows an immediate return on investment, reducing energy bills and overall operating costs.

By simply turning the lights off at night, on average, most office towers show an energy savings of 4 to 8 percent per year. For example, in a 600,000-square-foot office space, that can amount to annual savings of more than US\$120,000. Because buildings remain completely unoccupied during the evening, further energy savings accrue from reduced use of elevators and heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems.

In addition to cost reduction based on energy savings, daylight cleaning also contributes to overall operational savings. Turning off the lights at night helps light bulbs and ballasts last longer and reduces the labor cost required to change them when they burn out.

Improved tenant satisfaction is another financial benefit to daylight cleaning programs. When tenants are content, they will be less likely to seek new facilities for their operations. As a result, this increases the consistency of occupancy rates in an otherwise inconsistent economy.

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The environmental impact

Lights contribute to more than 22 percent of a building's overall energy consumption. By turning off the lights in the evening and reducing a facility's overall energy consumption, building managers directly limit their carbon footprint—meaning that fewer greenhouse gases are released into the air.

"Before implementing our daylight cleaning program, our lights were on until 2 a.m.," said John Sorich, director of office services at Fluor Enterprises® in Aliso Viejo, Calif. "Now we are able to shut the lights off by 9 p.m. This has led to a significant reduction in our carbon footprint."

Another environmental benefit to daylight cleaning is the reduction in nighttime bird kills. According to the Bird Conservation

Network, more than 100 million birds die every year from flying into windows. At night, bright lights confuse birds, causing changes to migratory patterns. Recent research by ornithologists at the Field Museum of Natural History confirmed that simply turning off bright lights or closing blinds reduces bird deaths by 83 percent.

Turning off the lights at night also reduces urban light pollution. The U.S. Green Building Council addresses this in the LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification criteria as "light trespass." A dark evening sky allows urban residents to see more stars.

These environmental benefits are so pronounced that many companies now see



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daylight cleaning as an integral part of their overall corporate responsibility and environmental management strategy.

Developing a program

To test the impact of daylight cleaning, many businesses begin by implementing the program at corporate headquarters. From there, successes can be evaluated which eases the process in future installations.

"Communication is the key to implementing a daylight cleaning program," said Sorich. "Make sure all constituents are well informed of the program's purpose, expected changes and results. This helps everyone realize the importance of daylight cleaning so when it rolls out, there are no surprises."

Information should be conveyed in meetings, memos and marketing collateral. The message should include specific details of the energy savings, reduced operating cost, environmental impact and benefit to cleaning staff.

"Businesses that are considering a daylight cleaning program should enlist the assistance of an experienced consultancy to facilitate the process," Sorich added. "There are so many considerations to be made that janitorial service organizations or departments typically do not have the resources to properly put the program in place. Using a company that can help communicate the program, train workers and measure results will help limit any complications."

A good business practice

For many facility managers and building owners, daylight cleaning contributes to a successful property management model. It adds to a building's return on investment by lowering overall operating costs. Daylight cleaning reduces training, labor and other costs associated with cleaning staff turnover. It also helps retain existing tenants and can significantly contribute to a building's green profile, increasing its appeal to potential new tenants. Daylight cleaning can be the next step in the evolution of your company's green profile. **FMJ**



Dave Hewett is chairman of Daylight Cleaning Systems USA. He has more than 30 years of business experience in all aspects of the real estate and facility management industry, working for both building owners and service providers. DCS has aligned with organizations that improve building efficiency, including JohnsonDiversey. For more information on how to implement a daylight cleaning program, go to <http://www.dcsglobalenterprise.com>.



Rob Kohlhagen is area vice president, sustainable solutions at JohnsonDiversey, Inc. He has led a team to develop the state-of-the-art environmentally superior cleaning program titled Healthy High Performance Cleaning. HHPC combines environmentally preferable chemicals, equipment, training and best practices to reduce environmental impacts and improve indoor environmental quality. For more information on JohnsonDiversey or the Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments, visit www.johnsondiversey.com or www.greenerfacilities.org.

¹ <http://health.usnews.com/usnews/health/briefs/childrenshealth/hb041027a.htm>