

# HARNESS DATA TO DRIVE EFFICIENT RETAIL CLEANING PROGRAMMES

An Introduction to  
**Asset and Cleaning Operations Management**  
for Retail Organisations



## **ABSTRACT:**

Retail organisations recognise the value clean premises can bring in boosting customer satisfaction and staff productivity. But with an eye on the bottom line, retail facility managers are increasingly asked to do more with less — delivering outstanding cleaning performance while lowering the overall cost to clean. For building managers looking to increase operational efficiency, a comprehensive asset management solution is a powerful tool that provides complete visibility into key cleaning performance metrics, including detailed data on machine and cleaning technology usage. By harnessing the power of cleaning performance data, an asset management solution enables a retail facility manager to identify opportunities to increase operational efficiency — from improving operator productivity to optimising cleaning resource usage. With C-level executives looking for real-world return on their cleaning investment, facility managers can demonstrate improved cleaning efficiency while connecting consistent, outstanding cleaning performance with improved customer satisfaction, increased staff productivity and other key business metrics to demonstrate the true value of clean.



## RETAIL CLEANING: FEELING THE BUDGET SQUEEZE

In the retail business, the value of clean premises is well recognised as a way to enhance customer satisfaction, drive sales and improve employee productivity. Although retail executives see the numbers behind the value of clean, retail facility managers continually face the challenge of doing more with less. The recession of the last decade has dramatically shrunk the budgets of many in-house cleaning departments, and while the economy has steadily improved, many organisations are choosing to continue their austerity measures to protect the bottom line. In fact, a recent Proctor & Gamble study showed that 73 per cent of in-house cleaning professionals are feeling pressure to lower operating costs, leading a majority (59 per cent) to report that they continue to take the “doing more with less” approach in their decision-making and operations.<sup>1</sup>

### HOW CAN WE DRIVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY?

To keep building cleaning costs down, many retailers are now seeking to apply the same business intelligence tools used across the rest of the business. CleanLink noted this increased upper management intervention in its 2015 Industry Trends report, and highlighted how business intelligence metrics are increasingly used to find operational efficiencies and optimise cleaning resource usage. A related trend from the report involves the applications of financial data analytics to find cost efficiencies in cleaning operations, and use forensic techniques, including benchmarking, to optimise labour deployment.<sup>2</sup>

In-house facility managers in every industry are clearly feeling pressure from above. A 2015 Cleaning and Maintenance Management survey found that improving productivity and operational efficiency was a key priority for 78 per cent of in-house facility managers.<sup>3</sup> However, CleanLink found that only 1 in 5 facility managers are currently deploying strategies specifically targeted at increasing operational efficiency as a cost-saving measure.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup><http://news.pg.com/press-release/pg-corporate-announcements/pg-professional-survey-reveals-customer-satisfaction-top-pr>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.cleanlink.com/news/article/Report-Identifies-2015-Trends-In-Facility-Management--17912>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.cmmonline.com/articles/234682-survey-says>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.cleanlink.com/hs/article/Survey-Budgets-And-Their-Affect-On-Departments-Member-Content--18484>

<sup>5</sup>Chain Store Age Magazine

**40%** of retailers manage facility cleaning in-house<sup>5</sup>

### TOP 3 CLEANING CHALLENGES FOR FACILITY MANAGERS<sup>5</sup>

- 1 INCONSISTENT CLEANING
- 2 SUBSTANDARD CLEANING PERFORMANCE
- 3 OPERATOR PRODUCTIVITY

**73%** of in-house cleaning professionals are feeling pressure to lower operating costs<sup>1</sup>

PRODUCTIVITY AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY ARE KEY PRIORITIES FOR

**78%**

OF IN-HOUSE FACILITY MANAGERS<sup>3</sup>

**1 IN 5**



facility managers are deploying strategies targeted at increasing operational efficiency as a cost-saving measure<sup>4</sup>

THE INACCURACY OF SELF-REPORTING,  
AND THE REALITY OF SUPERVISORS  
WHO SIMPLY CANNOT BE  
EVERYWHERE AND SEE EVERYTHING,  
POINT TO THE NEED FOR A MORE  
OBJECTIVE, DATA-DRIVEN SOLUTION

### **A NEED FOR BETTER FLEET METRICS**

One reason for this discrepancy: many retail facility managers lack accurate data and insights to correctly drive increased cleaning efficiency. The cleaning industry has been slow to leverage new technologies that provide machine performance data and other fleet metrics, leaving most retail facility managers to rely on self-reported checklists and supervision to measure performance across large cleaning fleets that can span multiple sites. Imagine if a retail sales manager was tasked with gauging sales volume by counting how many units were sold during brief visits to each retail location, and asking his salespeople to report how many units they sold each day. The inaccuracy of self-reporting, and the reality of supervisors who simply cannot be everywhere and see everything, point to the need for a more objective, data-driven solution.

### **A POWERFUL SOLUTION EMERGING**

As retailers are looking for ways to drive increased cleaning efficiency, a single, integrated solution is enabling powerful results. New technologies that deliver precise cleaning performance data enable retail cleaning fleet managers to closely monitor key metrics — from machine usage data, to sustainable technology usage, to critical alerts requiring immediate attention. The data collected by these asset management solutions empowers retail fleet managers to identify trends and outliers, pinpoint opportunities for improvement, and track the progress of organised efforts to increase productivity and efficiency to lower overall cost to clean.

## **HARNESSING THE POWER OF DATA TO DRIVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY**

The robust usage data collected by today's asset management solutions provides an instant snapshot of fleet performance. But this data is just the starting point — the true potential of these solutions lies in the myriad ways you can leverage this data to develop new insights, identify opportunities and drive differentiators. Here are five critical steps to begin turning reliable data into powerful results:

### **1. COLLECT USAGE DATA TO DRIVE CONSISTENT CLEANING**

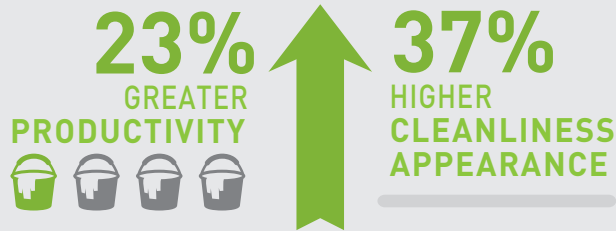
Customers remember the rare bad experience more than years of good ones. A dirty floor can drop your customers' facility appearance rating by as much as 75 per cent, and a consumer survey conducted by ISSA found that 95 per cent of shoppers would be less likely to make a purchase at a retail location with dirty premises.<sup>6</sup> The first priority for a retail fleet manager is ensuring consistent cleaning practices that deliver the enhanced image and customer satisfaction the retail organisation is counting on. An asset management solution enables objective verification of compliance with cleaning standards and protocols. Looking at machine usage data, fleet managers can monitor average daily usage and drill down to examine specific sites or machines to ensure consistent cleaning performance across every site and machine.

Though the cleaning industry has been slow to adopt this technology, forward-thinking leaders are already showing impressive results. A survey by Cleaning Maintenance and Management of nearly 400 facilities across the USA compared cleaning performance between fleets using traditional, non-performance-based standards and those using data-driven standards.<sup>7</sup> The data-driven fleets achieved nearly 23 per cent greater productivity, and an assessment of cleanliness appearance saw data-driven fleets score more than 20 points higher on the 100-point scale. Not surprisingly, the data-driven fleets consistently achieved higher customer satisfaction, thanks to their more efficient and effective cleaning.

<sup>6</sup>ISSA "The Value of Clean": [http://www.ebpsupply.com/files/7313/5879/3002/Value\\_of\\_Cleaning.pdf](http://www.ebpsupply.com/files/7313/5879/3002/Value_of_Cleaning.pdf)

<sup>7</sup><http://www.cmmonline.com/articles/230942-comparison-of-key-industry-performance-metrics>

DATA DRIVES RESULTS  
**FLEETS USING  
PERFORMANCE-BASED  
STANDARDS ACHIEVED**



**AND ALMOST 10% HIGHER  
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**  
THAN FLEETS USING  
NON-DATA DRIVEN RESULTS

## 2. IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AND REDUCE LABOUR COSTS

Labour has always been a top cost for retail cleaning managers, and a 2015 CleanLink survey found that labour now accounts for an average of 53 per cent of a cleaning operation's budget.<sup>8</sup> Asset management solutions help retail cleaning managers find opportunities to increase labour productivity and reduce labour-related costs — creating significant savings. By looking at machine usage data, fleet managers can identify specific sites — or even specific machines — that show below-average productivity. These outliers are prime opportunities to provide additional operator training to ensure staff are proficient in operating cleaning equipment and familiar with best practices to improve overall cleaning efficiency.

## 3. LEVERAGE USAGE DATA TO OPTIMISE FLEET SIZE AND DEPLOYMENT

How do you know you have the right sized cleaning fleet for your needs — and how do you ensure that your cleaning resources are best utilised? Under-utilised resources cut into a retailer's bottom line, and overworked machines can lead to costly breakdowns and the risk of safety incidents. Finding the right balance is a critical and incredibly difficult challenge for any retail facility manager, but the usage data provided by an asset management solution delivers actionable information to make these cost-saving decisions. Fleet managers can monitor average machine usage across sites, identifying resources that are under- or over-utilised and reassigning where needed. Detailed data can also play a key role in usage planning for new retail locations. By reviewing usage data from existing retail spaces, a retailer can estimate equipment and resource needs for a new location, ensuring that initial assignment will be cost-effective and deliver an outstanding first impression to customers.

## 4. ENSURE HEALTH & SAFETY BENEFITS TO REDUCE COSTS

Dirty premises don't just damage your brand, they undercut your staff productivity, which can lead to increased health and safety incidents. A study by ISSA found that unplanned absences led to a 54 per cent decrease in productivity<sup>9</sup>. Ensuring optimal staff training does not only improve overall productivity — it can reduce health and safety incidents to keep your staff safe and further reduce labour costs.

In addition, many retailers now recognise the value of sustainable cleaning technologies. For those retailers who make this sustainable cleaning investment, a comprehensive asset management solution can help fleet managers drive the consistent and correct usage

<sup>8</sup><http://www.cleanlink.com/hs/article/Survey-Budgets-And-Their-Affect-On-Departments-Member-Content--18484>

<sup>9</sup>ISSA "The Value of Clean": [http://www.ebpsupply.com/files/7313/5879/3002/Value\\_of\\_Cleaning.pdf](http://www.ebpsupply.com/files/7313/5879/3002/Value_of_Cleaning.pdf)

of these technologies. A CleanLink survey found that, with proper assignment and consistent usage, cleaning fleets are cleaning more efficiently and more cost-effectively — all while improving health for facility users and enhancing overall company image.<sup>10</sup>

## 5. FIND NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND TRACK YOUR RESULTS

Even the most efficient cleaning fleets have flaws — and an asset management solution provides limitless potential for continuous improvement as you identify new opportunities to enhance your cleaning operations.

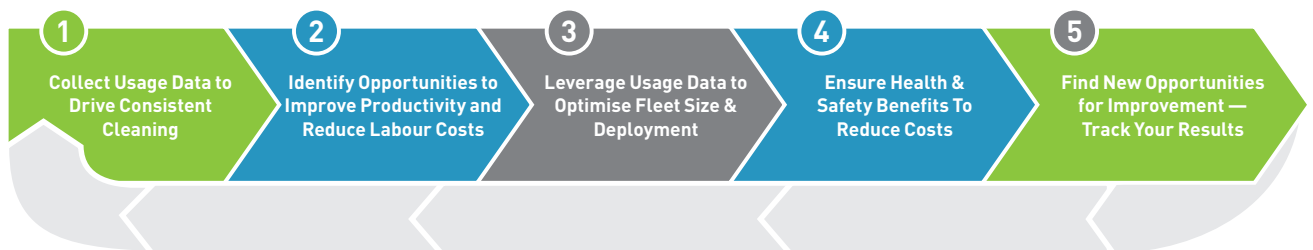
A continuous improvement process begins with benchmarking, or setting a baseline for your current performance. By monitoring fleet metrics such as machine usage, you can quickly establish benchmarks against which to measure your improvement efforts. In most multi-site retail fleet operations, a few leading sites will emerge, and these high performers can be used as models for creating best practices, investigating differences in operator training, management/supervision, equipment and product usage, and identifying those practices that contribute to improved performance and/or reduced costs.

This data can also be used to find your low-performing, high-cost outliers — those that fail to hit cleaning performance or customer satisfaction standards, or that show inconsistent machine usage. With the data in hand, you can investigate the specific practices of low-performing sites, provide additional operator training if necessary, and begin implementing best practices gleaned from your high-performing sites — bringing outliers up to par.

The downfall of many process improvement efforts lies in an inability to accurately track results and drive follow-through. Companies undertake costly process evaluations to identify opportunities for improvement and implement new processes, but lack the means to gauge their efficacy. A comprehensive asset management solution provides the framework for a complete improvement process, as the same data that enables you to identify needs and develop best practices also provides the yardstick to measure consistent improvement and overall efficacy.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT THROUGH BETTER REPORTING

With complete visibility of your key fleet metrics, you can drive a continuous cycle of improved cleaning performance and reduced cost-to-clean.



<sup>10</sup><http://www.cleanlink.com/hs/article/Survey-Departments-Embracing-Green-And-Sustainability-Member-Content--18486>

## CONCLUSION: PROVING THE VALUE OF CLEAN RETAIL FACILITIES

With most retail cleaning managers feeling the budget pinch, there is a critical need to demonstrate the specific, real-world value of high-quality cleaning. Without this proof of performance, retail cleaning managers can easily find themselves in a downward spiral — struggling to maintain clean premises with a tight budget and unable to make a hard-evidence case for increased funding.

New asset management solutions provide retail facility managers with visibility into key cleaning performance metrics, empowering them to drive increased efficiency and a lower cost-to-clean while ensuring consistent, high-quality results. With the cleaning programme operating at optimal efficiency, the retail fleet manager can clearly demonstrate these efforts — and their significant cost savings — in the universal language of business metrics. Perhaps most powerfully, the cleaning performance data provided by an asset management solution can easily be linked to other key retail metrics — from customer satisfaction surveys and sales figures to absenteeism and productivity figures — to demonstrate the proven value of a retailer's investment in consistent, high-quality facility cleaning programmes.

### READY TO ELEVATE YOUR FLEET PERFORMANCE?

Contact a Tennant specialist today to learn how IRIS Asset Manager can enhance your cleaning performance, reduce cost-to-clean and help your fleet stand above the competition.

**800.964.9644**  
**[www.tennantco.com/iris](http://www.tennantco.com/iris)**

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