



COMPANY:
Mid-American Cleaning Contractors

LOCATION:
Columbus, OH

EMPLOYEES:
750

CIMS Helps Mid-American Cleaning Contractors Standardize Procedures from Site to Site

Ask Bob Swan, vice president of Mid-American Cleaning Contractors, a Columbus, Ohio based building service contractor responsible for cleaning 15 million square feet of space every day about his organization's extensive set of core values and he understandably beams with pride. After all, Swan firmly believes that such core values, including integrity, honesty and reliability, serve as the blueprint for Mid-American's success and enable the organization to maintain long-existing partnerships and provide the best customer service possible at a fair price.

That's why, when Swan heard about ISSA's new Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) certification program, he encouraged his company to go for it. CIMS fit with Mid-American's existing culture, and the way he saw it, putting his company under the CIMS microscope would benefit Mid-American in more ways than one..

"I saw that, first and foremost, CIMS would make us a better company because it would force us to focus on those things that influential professionals in our industry have identified as the most important characteristics of a company of excellence," says Swan. "It would also provide an opportunity for Mid-American to be identified and recognized by those same individuals, professionals in our industry, as a leader and top-flight company. For us, that was a double benefit."

Tony Cardoso, Mid-American's division manager, agrees. "We thought the process of preparing for the assessment would give us a feel for what we were doing right and what we needed to improve," he says. "It also gave us a professional standard to benchmark against. And that was important to us."

Swan studied the CIMS materials and found that his company already had much of the necessary procedures and documentation in place.

"We weren't going to have to re-invent the wheel," he says. "We were doing most of what we should have been doing, but we found we had to focus on how we were doing it, why we were doing it, and documenting what we were doing."

The process also helped Mid-American analyze and understand whether procedures were consistent from site to site and standardize where necessary, explains Kermit Nuesmeyer.

"One of the biggest benefits of CIMS that I've seen is the fact that all of our processes and procedures are standardized now," he explains. "Before CIMS, managers of different sites were doing things in different ways. But now, it's as though CIMS has cross-trained our site managers. Every one of them could walk into any of our sites and hit the ground running. They wouldn't miss a beat because everything is standardized from site to site."

For example, each site now has a binder containing a checklist of tasks that need to be done on every shift. That way, The task binder helps site managers immediately identify what has been done and what still needs to be done.

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us.”

~Bob Swan

Mid-American Cleaning
Contractors

**BEST TIP
FOR COMPANIES
THINKING ABOUT
CERTIFICATION:**

Don't be discouraged by your assessor's "poker face." The assessor's job is to determine compliance with the Standard without bias and is required to be thorough and look at almost all aspects of your organization. Without a serious assessment, the process would not work and certification would not mean much.

"We had all of the information, but it was in different places," he says. "CIMS helped us decide on a uniform format for all of the organization's documentation and put it all in one place."

The manual will be tremendously valuable when dealing with current and prospective clients, Cardoso stresses. "If any client has any questions about what we do — and they always have questions — the information is all right there."


Nuesmeyer explains that the process leading up to Mid-American's CIMS certification helped the company focus on its employees, as well.

"Sometimes, the associates out there on the job sites do not feel as appreciated as they would like," he says. "Because CIMS forced us to focus on their everyday jobs, they saw how important they were to us as a company and gained the level of appreciation they had been seeking."

Neusmeyer reports that this new level of appreciation has made quite a difference to both site managers and employees.

"They were happy to be involved. And when we were assessed and got the certification, they took pride in because they knew they were a big part of it. Now, the associates feel as though their jobs are more serious and more important."

In addition to benefiting his own company, Swan sees CIMS as beneficial to the industry as a whole.

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About CIMS:

CIMS is the first comprehensive management and operations standard for cleaning organizations. Administered by ISSA and the American Institute for Cleaning Sciences, CIMS is a standard of excellence designed to help building service contractors and in-house service providers develop quality, customer-centered organizations.

The CIMS framework is built around five quality principles that have proven to be the hallmarks of well-managed, successful cleaning operations:

- Quality Systems
- Service Delivery
- Human Resources
- Health, Safety & Environmental Stewardship
- Management Commitment

Why should a company certify to CIMS? Daniel Wagner, director of CIMS for the ISSA, explains: "Implementation of the standard's elements affords an organization a tremendous opportunity to validate its management systems and processes. Professional, customer-centered cleaning organizations finally have a touchstone resource, a common rallying point around which all members of the industry can gather and work toward achieving an unprecedented level of professionalism and excellence."



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