



**COMPANY:**  
Omni Facility Services

**HEADQUARTERS:**  
Southfield, Michigan

**EMPLOYEES:**  
900

## CIMS Certification Helps BSC Stand Out in Competitive Market

Omni Facility Services is a Midwest based building service contractor (BSC) with operations in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Missouri and Ontario, Canada. Having started as a small window washing company in 1910, Omni has grown with the BSC industry and prides itself on being on the cutting edge of innovation, technology and methods of improvement. So, when director of administration Michael Cadotte suggested that Omni pursue certification to the ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS), the company's president, Michael Stover, was understandably excited about the possibility. Stover, after all, was well aware of the value of third-party certification — having witnessed Omni maintain ISO certification since 1999 — and the ISO experience had armed him with a sound understanding of the unlimited potential of such a program to benefit the internal operations of a company.

Even before achieving ISO certification, Omni certainly had come a long way. Since opening its doors in 1910, Omni had grown into a full-service cleaning provider that catered to an increasingly diverse set of clientele. Yet, Cadotte and Stover were not satisfied and wanted more. Sharing a belief that staying on top is dependent on maintaining a strong commitment to quality and continuous improvement, the two immediately identified CIMS as an ideal way to enhance programs developed under ISO and further develop an effective organization-wide quality system. They also appreciated that CIMS was specific to the cleaning industry and dealt with the unique needs of a cleaning organization.

“We were all very enthusiastic about pursuing certification and the entire executive team was on board,” says Stover. “Assimilating to CIMS was manageable because, although CIMS deviated from what we already had, there was overlap with ISO and our own QUEST program.” QUEST is a program that was developed by the Omni executive management team and strives to drive the company to the forefront of the cleaning industry.

Omni's management team was also impressed that CIMS had been developed through a consensus-based process that brought together members of the cleaning, facility management and purchasing communities in a collaborative effort. They note that such a process facilitates the development of a standard that outlines the key characteristics of a successful cleaning organization, regardless of its size, while maintaining a focus on the specific needs of a cleaning organization's customers.

“One of the problems in our industry is that there are hardly any barriers to entry and there has been no formal way of finding out which contractor is most likely to be successful on a project,” says Ron Zacharias, Omni's vice president of business development. Zacharias points to CIMS as a tool that can help solve the problem noting that certification allows a standout organization to more effectively market itself as committed to excellence, while providing a facility manager or purchaser a better opportunity to objectively compare contractors. Zacharias notes that this allows those companies that work hard to maintain a consistent level of service and quality systems to be rewarded for their efforts.

Zacharias also believes that CIMS offers an improved opportunity to limit discrepancies and misunderstandings concerning what is expected in terms of service and what actually occurs over the life of a project by demanding that cleaning organizations work hand-in-hand with their customers and dedicate themselves to fulfilling customer needs.

The third party recognition afforded by CIMS also was a strong selling point to the Omni management team. “It was a very public way for us to be recognized and prove to our customers that we are a professional company and that we strive to maintain our industry standard,” says Cadotte, further noting that being acknowledged by the worldwide cleaning industry association provides a competitive edge when marketing services in a fragmented market.

“ This is an opportunity for an organization to grow, enhance its quality system, achieve a certain level of quality within the industry and have that level of quality validated by peers. We all benefit from becoming a more professional industry.”

~Michael G. Cadotte,  
Director of Administration,  
Safety & Quality,  
Omni Facility Services

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


*CIMS sets a bar that companies should try to meet and customers should use. Utilize CIMS as a marketing tool to help your company gain a competitive edge. Being able to go to market with this type of quality program will make your company more professional and will in turn help the entire industry to become more professional.*

Ultimately, given Omni's belief in the importance of conducting performance and management assessments, CIMS stood as a perfect fit. Zacharias notes that the Standard's methodology and the similarities between what is required under CIMS and ISO in terms of documenting and organizing quality systems made the certification process easier than it would otherwise have been, but the industry-specific elements contained within CIMS made the assessment process especially rewarding. "We were impressed by the fact that we were being audited and judged by an individual who knew the industry and knew what they were talking about," he says. "While our ISO auditor came in knowing nothing about the janitorial industry, our CIMS auditor came in already knowing everything."

Cadotte notes that achieving certification is not easy, but the realized benefits make the journey well worth the effort. He points to the comprehensive steps that needed to be taken and stresses the need to bring together Omni's entire team to achieve success. "There is always going to be some initial trepidation when you look at a well-written standard," he says. "We started out being somewhat nervous because although we were confident that we could meet the requirements we also knew that it wasn't going to be a slam dunk."

To achieve success, Omni took full advantage of the CIMS Certification Guide, a resource that breaks down the individual elements of the Standard and explains what is required by each, using the Guide to better identify and respond to problem areas. Omni then created project teams that were specifically responsible for certain portions of the Standard and held regular meetings to assess progress. Finally, when the day of the assessment arrived, the organization felt comfortable demonstrating compliance, knowing that they had worked through the process in an efficient and effective manner.

Now that the process is complete and Omni has achieved certification, management credits CIMS for the role it played in helping the organization attain a heightened level of understanding about the inner-workings of the company. Management further stresses a belief that CIMS has and will continue to allow Omni to stand out in the cleaning industry as a top company, distinguishable from most of its competitors.

"We started as a mom-and-pop company, but now we've become a quality-driven and respected organization in the cleaning industry. This is something that we are very proud of and we recognize CIMS' contribution to this achievement," says Cadotte. 

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

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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