raising standards

CIMS-GB: A Valuable Resource Toward
LEED Certification

By: Jim Peduto

A firsthand experience with the value of the Standard.

Facility managers are increasingly requesting green cleaning programs.

However, there still seems to be a lot of confusion in the cleaning industry and among facility managers about what truly constitutes "green cleaning."

Fortunately, standards are emerging that take the guess work out and provide contractors and facility managers with a tool to identify effective green cleaning programs.

Most facility managers want and expect a contractor to use more than a few green cleaning products — they frequently prefer that service providers' green cleaning program meets the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) criteria to help them earn points toward green building certification.

ISSA's Cleaning Industry Management Standard for Green Buildings (CIMS-GB) makes the LEED-compliant cleaning decision easy.

CIMS-GB is a standard and a certification for cleaning organizations.

It parallels the LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance (LEED-EBOM) criteria, making it a valuable resource for both cleaning organizations and their facility customers.

Facility managers can rest assured that cleaning organizations certified under CIMS-GB are positioned to deliver the maximum number of LEED points.

Plus, managers have the added peace of mind that comes from choosing a CIMS-certified contractor.

Third-party Validation

As the founder/owner of a cleaning business, Matrix Integrated Facility Management, I directly experienced the benefits of CIMS certification with honors: Superior quality, improved productivity, consistency throughout the company and better performance.

Matrix was one of the first companies certified under CIMS when the Standard was launched in 2008.

We were also one of the first building service contractors (BSCs) in North America to develop a branded, focused green cleaning program, which we named EcoSmart®.

Developed around green cleaning best practices, we knew EcoSmart was a high-quality, best-in-class program.

But, it wasn't until we went through the CIMS-GB third-party assessment and certification that we were able to truly validate the program for us as a business — and, more importantly, for our customers.

Earning CIMS-GB status could not have been better timed.

Our customers were more determined than ever to earn LEED certification, and with the alignment of LEED and CIMS-GB, we could now confidently assure them that we could help them accomplish their goals.

Business Diagnostics

The process of going through the CIMS-GB assessment and certification process was especially valuable.

Any organization that goes through the process will appreciate the results and the learning that come from the process.

It is like taking your car in for a tune-up or going to a doctor for a physical.

You obtain a thorough "check-up" on your business.

You might find that, regardless of the lack of symptoms, your organization could be doing better in one or more areas.

This allows cleaning organizations to identify potential future issues that could one day hurt your business.

By going through this business check-up, we were able to identify and correct a few potential issues that we might not have discovered on our own.

One Step Ahead

Building service contractors that earn CIMS-GB certification today are one step ahead: A step ahead of potential business issues, a step ahead of facility managers seeking a green cleaning program and a step ahead of the competition.

As facility managers continue to seek contractors that deliver green cleaning programs compliant with LEED, contractors with CIMS-GB certification will continue to win new customers and retain existing ones. *CM*

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