



By: Jim Peduto

Manage A System In Seven Steps

How to use the CIMS certification process to create and manage a quality system.

In the July issue, Raising Standards raised the question, "What do you manage — a system or confusion?"

The column included an operations check-up to help managers determine whether they are managing a quality system or reacting to issues as they arise. How did you do?

It is easy to find room for improvement within organizations that lack systems and processes designed to produce consistent, quality service for customers.

To standardize processes and ensure they have a quality system in place, many of the cleaning industry's leading organizations have structured their operations around the Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS).

CIMS is built around five universally accepted management principles of well-managed, successful cleaning operations: Quality systems; service delivery; human resources; health, safety and environment; and management commitment.

CIMS also includes an optional green cleaning component.

Most organizations find that the preparation process for CIMS certification is a highly valuable learning experience that improves operating results.

This seven-step process will help you mold your organization into a well-tuned service delivery machine.

■ Step 1: Establish the current state of the organization

What processes currently exist? Gather and organize all documentation describing organization policies, standards and processes.

■ Step 2: Define the state in which the organization needs to be

What are the best practices that your organization should adopt? What are the high-level needs that must be met? Make a list or create charts or diagrams to outline where the organization needs to go.

■ Step 3: Appoint a leader or owner of the certification process

Find one person to lead the certification process. This person will "own" the project and be accountable for all the steps leading up to certification. They will also serve as the key CIMS contact for others within the organization as well as those outside, including CIMS assessors and/or an ISSA Certification Expert (ICE).

■ Step 4: Apply for CIMS certification and download the checklist

Visit www.issa.com/standard to apply for CIMS certification, download the compliance checklist, locate a local ICE professional and obtain other pertinent information.

■ Step 5: Use the checklist to assess the current state of the organization

The CIMS compliance checklist includes a comprehensive set of criteria that organizations must adhere to in order to achieve certification. The checklist is an invaluable tool for self-evaluation and review. This step is especially beneficial because it will help your organization quickly see where it is already in compliance and where opportunities for improvement exist.

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■ Step 6: Review findings from previous steps and determine next steps with an ICE

ICE professionals are certified to provide training and consultation to organizations working to comply with and prepare for certification. An ICE will review the CIMS compliance checklist with the organization process leader and also go over the assessment checklist. An ICE can provide invaluable third-party insight to organizations preparing for certification.

■ Step 7: Assemble data and findings to create or update standard operating procedures (SOPs)

By this point, organizations should have come up with a list of improvements needed based on checklist and assessment results. It is essential to fold this information into existing SOPs. If the organization does not have SOPs, it is during this step that they are created and documented with identified improvements in mind. SOPs provide organizations with the information needed to ensure consistency in the quality of performance.

Going through these seven steps is an eye-opening and educational process during which organizations will uncover valuable keys to unlocking their potential for improved processes, better systems and increased success. *CM*

Jim Peduto is the president of Matrix Integrated Facility Management LLC and the co-founder of the American Institute for Cleaning Sciences (AICS). AICS is the registrar for ISSA's Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) certification program. Visit www.issa.com/cims for more information.