

Are you ready to *elevate your organization?*

*The Cleaning Industry Management Standard
and certification program is designed to do just that.*

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The cleaning industry finally has a standard for identifying high-quality, high-performance cleaning operations.



Separate yourself, your employees and your services by achieving CIMS certification.

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Certification to the Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) is a way for both building service contactors (BSCs) and in-house service providers (ISPs) to differentiate their operations and demonstrate their professionalism.

In addition, facility managers and purchasing organizations are already incorporating CIMS into their requests for proposals.

To prepare for what's ahead, BSCs and ISPs should have an understanding of the standard, its benefits and what it takes to get certified.

What is CIMS?

The Cleaning Industry Management Standard and certification program was spearheaded by ISSA and developed through a true consensus-based process.

Ultimately, development of the standard brought together a group of organizations representing more than 100,000 professionals from the cleaning, facilities management and purchasing communities.

CIMS is a framework of management principles designed to assist cleaning organizations in developing quality, customer-centered organizations.

It sets forth processes, procedures and supporting documentation that are universally recognized as the hallmarks of a well-run and customer-focused BSC or ISP.

The standard, which is available for download at www.issa.com/standard, does not specify products or cleaning techniques that must be used, but instead outlines five areas of best-management practices that are the cornerstones of well-managed and customer-centered cleaning organizations: Quality systems; service delivery; human resources; health, safety and environmental stewardship; and management commitment.

Quality systems

Quality is the cornerstone of a successful, customer-centered cleaning organization.

But, how does an organization develop itself and run its operations to assure customers that it is positioned to deliver quality services?

The key is the implementation of a quality system — a framework for effectively running operations.

An effective quality system includes: Defining cleaning service requirements, implementing a quality plan, measuring performance, obtaining relevant feedback from the customer, and committing to continual improvement.

Steps to certification

Organizations that wish to apply for CIMS assessment should start by obtaining a copy of an application, the standard and a compliance checklist, which are available at www.issa.com/standard.

The next steps include careful review of the standard and self-assessment.

CIMS-certified experts and consultants are available to guide organizations through this process and are listed on the ISSA website.

Once an organization is confident that it complies with the standard, it must demonstrate compliance with the standard's five elements through a combination of documentation and performance.

An independent third-party assessment verifies that the organization has successfully implemented its processes.

Following review of documentation and an on-site evaluation by an independent CIMS-accredited, third-party assessor, an organization may then be recommended for CIMS certification.

— J.P.



Service delivery

Having implemented a quality system, a cleaning organization also needs to institute processes and procedures that foster the effective delivery of services.

Meeting customers' requirements is the

foundation of successful service organizations.

To ensure acceptable service delivery, an organization will need to implement a service delivery plan that outlines the organization's customer-related processes, including workloading, staffing, purchasing, and handling of unexpected events.

Each organization will follow its own unique business process, but such processes need to be structured to make certain that the customers' needs are met and service is provided as expected.

Human resources

It has been said that a cleaning organization's most important asset is its people.

A cleaning organization will only operate in an efficient and professional manner if its employees are well-trained, customer-focused and dedicated to delivering a quality service.

Therefore, an organization must ensure that it efficiently and effectively manages its "human capital" in a way that enhances organizational performance.

CIMS is a framework of management principles designed to assist cleaning organizations in developing quality, customer-centered operations.

From hiring to training to the actual delivery of service, an organization's human resources, including both management and cleaning personnel, must be prepared to uphold the organization's commitment to quality.

Health, safety and environmental stewardship

Quality cleaning and maintenance services are safe, healthy and sustainable.

They also should positively impact the built environment.

This section addresses the processes, systems and documentation as they relate to an organization's commitment to health, safety and environmental stewardship.

Because the majority of this section requires an organization to meet existing legal and regulatory obligations, compliance with most of the provisions is mandatory.

Certain provisions, however, are specific to organizations operating within the U.S. and, therefore, international organizations seeking to meet the requirements of this section should comply with all parallel laws and/or regulations that apply in their specific jurisdictions.

Management commitment

Effective management and the implementation of appropriate management systems are keys to ensuring the delivery of quality service that meets customer expectations.

An organization needs to have either a clearly defined vision for the future or an understanding of its mission, should actively plan for the future and should be prepared for times of organizational change.

A well-managed organization should also have well-defined organizational roles and responsibilities and an effective communication plan.

Finally, an organization should ensure that it is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and has secured all necessary insurance and licensing.

Benefits for BSCs and ISPs

CIMS not only provides a reference

guide for quality operations, it is also a performance standard.

As such, CIMS provides third-party recognition and, therefore, credibility to BSCs and ISPs that achieve certification.

A BSC can use this certification to set his/her business apart from competitors and demonstrate commitment to customer satisfaction.

CIMS certification distinguishes leading firms by furnishing facility managers and purchasing professionals with an easy-to-use quality-measurement resource.

BSCs can also use CIMS certification as a valuable marketing tool to demonstrate their firm's commitment to delivering quality services and achieving customer satisfaction.

Similarly, CIMS certification provides custodial, environmental services and facilities managers with proof of improved efficiency and offers documentation to evaluate and elevate operations.

The standard also helps ISPs face the pressures of increasing service demands and shrinking budgets by providing the answers administrators, board members, executives and occupants are seeking.

The elements of the CIMS standard identify the characteristics of high-performance cleaning organizations and set forth the framework for operational success.

CIMS is a touchstone resource around which BSCs and ISPs can gather and work toward achieving an unprecedented level of professionalism and excellence.

What's next?

CIMS is currently in the case study

phase.

Following an open application process, 23 organizations were selected to participate in the CIMS Certification Case Study Program and become charter certified organizations.

The case study participants represent a cross-section of organization size and geographic location.

The organizations range from having as few as 20 full-time equivalents (FTEs) to 5,000 FTEs and service a broad spectrum of facility types.

As of early October, cleaning organizations, including BSCs and ISPs, have already achieved CIMS certification.

Detailed case studies documenting each of the case study assessments will be available this fall.

Initial feedback from the certified firms indicates the certification process has been very rewarding and has produced tangible benefits.

In October, ISSA will open certification to the industry at large.

Applications for CIMS certification have already been received and those contemplating certification are encouraged to apply early.

People are recognizing the need for truly standardized cleaning operations and management and it might not be long before customers (whether they use a BSC or an ISP) require CIMS certification.

We finally have a tool that distinguishes firms that consistently deliver what they promise.

CIMS has the potential to elevate our industry and our businesses by recognizing firms that truly perform. **CM**