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CIMS As A Prequalification Tool

Building service contractors can use the CIMS checklist to help protect their customers from subpar service.

Many building service contractors (BSCs) have chosen to demonstrate their professionalism by pursuing the Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) certification.

While certification to CIMS/CIMS-Green Building (GB) demonstrates the organization's commitment to quality, it doesn't mean that a firm is safe from market competition.

There is still the possibility that your customer will eventually test the market and explore competing cleaning firms.

This article will help you use the CIMS checklist to manage the process and increase your chances of retaining the account.

The CIMS checklist acts as a powerful prequalification tool that can help take the guesswork out of choosing a quality BSC and increase the customer's odds of outsourcing success.

The CIMS Checklist

1. Quality systems

BSC interview question: How does your organization develop itself and run its operations to ensure that it is positioned to deliver quality services?

What to look for: BSCs should be able to demonstrate 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.

2. Service delivery

BSC interview question: How does your organization ensure acceptable service delivery?

What to look for: BSCs should have in place 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.

3. Human resources

BSC interview question: How does your organization manage its human capital to enhance organizational performance?

What to look for: BSCs will only operate in an efficient and professional manner if its employees are well-trained, customer-

focused and dedicated to delivering a quality service.

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

4. Health, safety and environment

BSC interview question: What processes, systems and documentation does your organization have in place to demonstrate its commitment to health, safety and sustainability?

What to look for: BSCs should have documentation of its compliance with U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations, employee safety training programs and a written environmental policy.

5. Management commitment

BSC interview question: What management systems does your organization have in place to meet customer needs and to respond to organizational changes?

What to look for: BSCs should have documentation of a mission statement or vision for the future, strategic planning, such as business continuity and succession planning, an organizational chart and job descriptions and a risk management plan.

6. Green building

BSC interview question: Does your organization follow a green cleaning policy, covering the use of environmentally preferable cleaning products and processes?

What to look for: BSCs should have a written green cleaning policy that details the purchase and use of sustainable cleaning products and equipment, chemical and pollution control, pest management, solid waste management/recycling and resource conservation.

CIMS certification and criteria — when used as a checklist — can help you take the guesswork out of the prequalification process for your customers.

CIMS also gives certified BSCs the opportunity to protect their accounts from hiring a subpar BSC in the future.

It also helps BSCs pare down the competition and protect them from falling victim to a competitor with better pricing but lackluster performance. *CM*

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