

The Dispatch finds solutions with help from HLH Systems

Can you improve a good thing? That was a question Kevin George, director of the Engineering and Maintenance Department for the Dispatch Printing Company asked himself regarding the cost of cleaning its facility located at 5300 Crosswind Dr., in Columbus. This company publishes *The Columbus Dispatch* newspaper. His answer came in the form of some cost-saving advice from HLH Systems, a janitorial consulting firm located in Dublin, Ohio.

The printing plant facility is one of several buildings owned by the Dispatch. George and his staff of five people work with contractors to clean and maintain these buildings.

The first approach used by HLH was to help George communicate the Dispatch's exact needs for cleaning and maintenance to potential cleaning contractors. "Harry taught us that instead of asking for a Request for Proposal (RFP), that we should ask for a Request for Quotation (RFQ)," said George. It is through this type of request that George and his staff got a precise picture of how and when work will be done. For example, the RFP method simply recommends cleaning a room three days a week. Using the RFQ process, the specific kind of cleaning to take place in a room is defined. "If it's necessary to dust ceiling fans or some other type of high dusting tasks on a regular basis, through the RFQ we have better accountability about the performance of that task," he added. "The RFQ states which rooms, how many fans, and how often dusting will take place," he said.

The precision of the RFQ explains the type of equipment recommended for use to clean a building. This plan also guides contractors to be more efficient in utilizing their staff. Ultimately, the company experiences lower labor costs through this method of analyzing the when and how the cleaning process takes place.

Although George has worked at the Dispatch for over 23 years, he found HLH's recommendations for equipment and cleaning procedures to be very helpful for getting the best service from their cleaning contractor. He said that Harry provided very good information about the latest industry trends.



George noted the management tools offered by HLH to its clients as being useful within his department to make sound business decisions and to interact with other departments as new operating recommendations are being made.

HLH is owned and operated by Harry and Pat McClure. Together this husband and wife team has successfully advised clients throughout the Midwest about ways to maximize their efforts to clean buildings. It's their philosophy that you don't have to sacrifice quality to make sure a building is properly cleaned and maintained.

"It's good to see a company like the Dispatch take a proactive approach to the cleaning and maintenance of its printing facilities," said Harry. Many times we get panic calls from customers who are paying for cleaning service, but their buildings are dirty," he added. "If you have numerous complaints from tenants about the lack of cleanliness of restrooms and offices, then you could potentially chase away current and new customers," according to Harry. He also noted that dirty buildings could be a safety hazard. Germs could grow in unclean buildings, which potentially create health issues and absenteeism due to illness among employees.

"HLH typically saves its customers between 5 and 30% of its cleaning budgets," said Pat, a retired telecommunications executive. She added, "we had a client who thought he was spending 99 cents a square foot to clean his business. Actually, in some places the cost was more than triple. Recommendations were made to correct his spending imbalance, which will help him save quite a few dollars in his cleaning budget."

"In order for a business to be successful, you must regularly analyze how work is being done. Waiting until a problem develops can be very costly and produce the wrong answer during a panic situation," said Harry. The Dispatch's commitment to find better ways to operate ensures its ability of providing a high quality product at a competitive price to its customers.