



Paul Goldin – Avmor
**Vice President of
Sustainability and
Marketing**

Two-thirds of Canadians over the age of 15 are employees. On average, they spend about 60 per cent of their waking hours at work. And when surveyed, most reported that the workplace is an appropriate place to promote health issues.

- The Importance of Cleanliness -

The Benefits of Clean

Cleaning plays a vital role in our daily lives. Be it personal hygiene, such as washing our hands before we eat or covering our mouths when we cough, or setting a standard for environmental cleanliness, effective cleaning is our first line of defense against viruses and infectious diseases. While in healthcare environments the practical value of cleaning is widely accepted, in other fields such as education, property management, foodservice and hospitality, it is seen only as a necessary expense. Most building owners and facility managers view cleaning as a cost rather than an investment. As cleaning solution providers, we need to explain to executives, especially those “who hold the purse strings,” that maintaining a clean environment can pay for itself many times over, and often in surprising ways.

Cleaning for Health & Wellness

Effective cleaning should be an important part of a greater plan to create healthier indoor environments by eliminating the contaminants that can make people sick. Lack of hygiene and cleanliness is an open invitation to infectious disease.

Two-thirds of Canadians over the age of 15 are employees.¹ On average, they spend about 60 per cent of their waking hours at work. And when surveyed, most reported that the workplace is an appropriate place to promote health issues.² After all, what happens in the office, on the plant floor, or wherever Canadians might work, can have a profound impact on their overall health and well-being.

The average absenteeism rate in Canada in 2011, based on Statistics Canada data, was 9.3 days per full-time employee, with the public sector absenteeism rate being higher than that of the private sector. Despite the enormous cost of absenteeism, less than half of Canadian organizations currently track employee absences. Absenteeism rates were highest in the health care and social assistance sector, followed by government and public administration. It is estimated that the direct cost of absenteeism averaged 2.4 per cent of gross annual payroll – which translated to a loss of \$16.6 billion in 2012.

Though absenteeism is a problem, presenteeism is sweeping across Canadian workplaces. Presenteeism occurs when employees are physically present but due to a physical illness or an emotional issue, are distracted to the point of reduced productivity. A recent study by Statistics Canada found that lost productivity from presenteeism was at least 7.5 times greater than productivity lost from absenteeism. It is estimated that presenteeism costs the Canadian

¹ <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/hlt/97-559/Index-eng.cfm>

² The Workplace Health System was tested with organizations that were actively seeking to improve their workers' health. About 50,000 Canadian employees, primarily workers in large companies, participated. Because the sample was not random, one cannot generalize the findings to the general working population. The results do provide useful insights and indication of what may apply to the rest of the workforce. (<http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/employers/free-resources/workplace-health-system/overview>)

businesses anywhere from 15 to 25 billion dollars per year. Whether it is absenteeism or presenteeism, both affect the employers' bottom line. There is no doubt that a clean, healthy environment benefits workers, occupants, patients, staff and students alike by creating a welcoming atmosphere, encouraging hard work, collective effort and improving health and all around well-being.

Cleaning for Safety

A clean environment promotes a safe workplace. People tend to take more pride in their work, be more productive, and are more particular about safety. Effective cleaning can result in fewer slips, trips and falls (STF) accidents.

The average cost of an STF incident is \$3,500 in direct Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) costs, and as much as \$21,000 in indirect costs, which include worker and equipment replacement, downtime, legal expenses and other expenditures.

While STFs are among the most common causes of injuries in the workplace, they are also among the most easy to prevent. Slips, trips and falls need not occur with such staggering frequency if managers and supervisors are mindful of areas where potential incidents are likely to happen. Engaging preventative measures such as keeping specific areas properly cleaned and maintained can drastically reduce injury.

Cleanliness can also decrease fire hazards and lower worker exposure to hazardous substances, such as dusts and vapours that can cause allergic reactions and allergies. The prevalence of asthma in Canada has been increasing over the last 20 years and it is estimated over 3 million Canadians currently suffer from asthma.³ Respiratory illness costs the Canadian economy \$5.83 billion annually, taking into consideration the costs of care (hospitals, drugs and physicians).⁴ Some factors that can cause asthmatic reactions are frequent exposures to dust mites, mould, dirt, chemicals and airborne pollutants, such as pollen, or poor indoor air quality in a workplace.

Cleaning for Brand Protection

A clean building gives your business a professional image of a tidy, organized, productive and successful business. Appearance is one of the major elements that separates one building from another and brings added value.

Maintaining a clean workplace does not solely consist of taking into account hygiene considerations but aesthetic value of a company as well. Both staff and visitors will feel more comfortable and think far more positively about your company if you ensure the upkeep of your offices. A first impression is a lasting impression. People are more likely to frequent your establishment or building knowing that it is being well maintained. Consider how effective integration and consistent portrayal of a brand image can benefit your business. Your brand image touches and intersects all aspects of a business, from marketing to sales and operations – including cleaning operations.

Whether it is absenteeism or presenteeism, both affects the employers' bottom line. There is no doubt that a clean, healthy environment serves extremely well with workers, occupants, patients, staff and students alike, creating a welcoming atmosphere, often subconsciously encouraging hard work, collective effort and improve health and well-being all around.

³ <http://www.asthma.ca/corp/newsroom/pdf/asthmastats.pdf>

⁴ Projected from Health Canada (2002). Economic Burden of illness in Canada, 1998. Ottawa ON Health Canada Avmor Ltd. Copyright © 2014 Avmor Ltd. All rights reserved. Printed in Canada

A first impression is a lasting impression... Your brand image touches and intersects all aspects of a business, from marketing, sales and operations – including cleaning operations.

The goals of a comprehensive maintenance program will help reduce capital repairs and costs. This can impact a business' bottom line by preventing unscheduled shutdowns and repairs of a facility or organization.

Cleaning to Protect the Lifespan of your Building

A regular and daily scheduled cleaning program for critical touch point areas is vital to control the spread of infectious disease. Consider all the things that we come into contact with daily. From keyboards to phones, light switches to doorknobs, frequent hand washing is the single most important thing you can do to prevent yourself from getting sick, and to prevent the spread of germs to other surfaces and people.

Establishing the goals of a comprehensive maintenance program will impact a business' bottom line by preventing unscheduled shutdowns and repairs of a facility or organization as well as help extend both equipment life and facility life. With an integrated cleaning program, a business has better control over staffing, tools and materials, including inventory and supplies required, as well as efficient equipment clean-up and maintenance. Let us not overlook the fact that a clean building or establishment can attract occupancy and business. A vacant building, or the lack of maintenance of a building and infrastructure, can negatively influence a community's morale. It can cause all forms of ill-health and psychological effects thereby reducing the economic growth of a community and even a city.

Sustainable Cleaning

The air inside a building typically contains as much as two to five times higher concentration of pollutants than outdoor air, yet most people spend on average 90 percent of their time indoors.

Conventional chemical products may serve as allergic triggers to individuals prone to such reactions, especially after inadvertently touching or ingesting any chemical residues. According to some estimates, one-third of cleaning products used today include ingredients that have negative impacts on indoor air quality and human health. These ingredients may include carcinogens, asthmagens, skin and eye irritants and endocrine disrupters, all of which are associated with cancer, reproductive disorders, and other human health issues.

Green practices can be as simple and low-cost as using cleaning supplies with low volatile organic compounds (VOCs). With conventional cleaning products, the long-term effects of what such chemicals could do to a person's health is an incentive to switch to eco-friendly supplies, especially considering the rise of asthma among Canadians.

Adopting a sustainable cleaning program can help increase energy-efficiency and high appearance levels, while also helping maintain odour control. It also decreases the need for laborious scrubbing and reduces SKUs. Sustainable cleaning provides quantifiable impacts on gas, water and energy use by accurately monitoring water and chemical waste, and reliably measuring cost reduction successes. In contrast, conventional cleaning does not allow facilities to easily calculate the amount of utilities and labour expended during cleaning.

Creating Proactive Solutions — Measuring Cleanliness

As indication becomes more prevalent in supporting the role of environmental cleaning in public and commercial areas to control the spread of infectious diseases, it is important to integrate measurement of cleanliness based on a scientific standard. Hand-held and other devices have been introduced in the cleaning industry that can measure the quantity of surface microbes, providing instant measurement of cleanliness. Improvements in cleanliness can be achieved with the use of measuring tools and well-chosen metrics, such as ATP (adenosine triphosphate) meters or fluorescent marking gels. These methods have improved the cleaning process as compared to the traditional visual assessments, which were based on visual assumptions of cleanliness. Pathogens are microscopic; thus a visually clean environment can still pose a health risk. ATP meter or fluorescent marking gel provides instant information on the level of contamination. These are portable devices which are easily affordable, provide accurate readings, and can be used in both commercial and public settings.

Certifications and Qualifications

Take the time to educate yourself and evaluate sustainable cleaning products and programs that are suitable for your building, facility or establishment. Keep in mind that there are several attributes that make one product preferable over another. Not all products are created equally to meet sustainability standards.

For example, Ecologo and Green Seal are widely accepted third party certification programs that evaluate green cleaning products. Ecologo is the Canadian standard, while Green Seal is the American standard. The two organizations have comparable criteria, and both standards have been adopted across North America and are interchangeable. By purchasing sustainable products that have been certified by either Ecologo or Green Seal, your facility is assured that these products have been thoroughly evaluated and their environmental claims confirmed. UL is widely-recognized as one of the world's most trustworthy third-party product safety testing and certification organizations.

Equally important to consider are cleaning service providers accredited by ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS), as well as CIMS-Green Building (GB) advisers. CIMS provides industry-recognized, third-party analysis and validation of an organization's achievement regarding quality and process improvement; a CIMS certification goes a long way toward putting a certified firm ahead of its competition in a competitive marketplace.

Also of added value, CIMS-Green Building (GB) advisers enable the contractor to help customers achieve points under the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance (LEED-EBOM) Green Building Rating System.

Quality enhancement, along with education and training, go hand-in-hand with the CIMS process. The principles of success embodied in the CIMS and CIMS-GB program are based on - and provide the foundation for - effective operations and process improvement, applicable to any size or type of business, department, or organization.

CIMS provides industry-recognized, third-party analysis and validation of an organization's achievement regarding quality and process improvement; CIMS certification goes a long way toward putting a certified firm ahead of its competition in a competitive marketplace.

The Importance of Cleanliness

The importance of cleanliness in our lives cannot be denied. Maintaining a clean environment is for the health of all humans, as their health completely depends on the atmosphere. A bad environment is solely responsible for spoiling the health of the people around.

Dirt and disease go together. Pathogens breed and thrive in dirt; and the epidemic diseases which sweep over our country are generally the results of dirty habits and surroundings. Cleanliness is an absolute necessity for one's self-respect and image – the same can be easily applied to a facility, business or establishment. We must maintain the cleanliness of our bodies, homes, buildings, surroundings and environment to have good health.

George Bernard Shaw once said "Better keep yourself clean and bright; you are the window through which you must see the world." How do you wish to see the world for yourself, the future of our generation and our environment?



About Avmor Ltd.: Headquartered in Laval, Quebec, Avmor is Canada's leading manufacturer of professional cleaning solutions aimed at the Facility Maintenance and Foodservice markets. Avmor offers cGMP (Current Good Manufacturing Practices), which is a prerequisite to be able to manufacture hand soaps that include disinfection claims and a DIN (Drug Identification number) provided by Health Canada. Avmor offers a full range of hand care products. Avmor's complete line of cleaning products include Cleaners/Degreasers, Floor Care, Washroom Care, Food Service Care, Hand Care, BioMaxx, Disinfectants and others. Some of Avmor's signature brands are **Av-mixx Dilution Control System, Biomor Biological Cleaning Solutions, Quick Stuff Food Service Cleaning System, Synergy Floor Care, EcoPure & Nanomor**, its new environmentally responsible sanitation program which features over 50 certified UL Ecologo products. For over 65 years, Avmor has remained at the industry forefront, defining product performance standards and striving for the safest and most cost-effective cleaning systems for professional use. Avmor Ltd. is a privately held company.

