

# How to Evaluate the Efficiency of Your Cleaning Equipment

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Over the years, we have worked with many clients, doing in-service custodial training workshops. When we do an in-service, we send ahead an inventory that lists the types of machines, chemicals and custodial hardware we would like to have available for training.

In some cases, we get most, if not everything, we ask for - equipment that works well, has the needed accessories, is clean and ready to go. But in other cases, we get equipment that obviously has not been used for a long time and is in sad need of repair, some of it as old as the hills.

## A TRUE STORY

Once we were in a building conducting a three-day seminar. On the third morning, we found a stone lobby floor (approximately 15,000 sq. ft.) all sticky and practically unusable. Someone had mopped undiluted cleaner over the entire floor. The guests of this facility had to walk across the floor to check out, eat breakfast, leave or enter through the front door. To say the least, they were very unhappy.

We were asked to help out. We asked if they had an automatic scrubber available. The answer was, "Yes, but it doesn't work." So the maintenance crew started hand-mopping the floor until a floor machine was found (no wet-vac was available), and they spent the better part of the morning trying to clean up this mess.

We had to start our seminar, but in a spare moment, one of us investigated the broken-down automatic. We found that the only problem was that the squeegee needed replacing. Of course, the batteries needed charging because the machine had sat idle for weeks. Someone had said, "It doesn't work," so it just sat there.

This machine could have been, and should have been used every day on this floor. If it had been used, this problem never would have happened. Or if it had happened, it would have been cleaned up in no time.

## THE POINT OF OUR STORY

What's the point of all this?

Do you know the condition of all of your cleaning equipment? Is it paying its way? Is it being used efficiently? Is it the right size/speed? Is it the most up-to-date available? Is the proper machine being used for its intended purpose?

May I suggest that you make up a form, listing the following information for every piece of equipment you have, old or new, used or not:

- Manufacturer
- Supplier
- Type (floor machine, wet/dry vac, etc)
- Model
- Serial Number
- Size
- RPMs
- Date purchased
- Current condition
- Date inspected

Maybe size or RPM is not applicable to all machines. If so, mark it "NA." Maybe you don't know the supplier or the date of purchase. If not, maybe it isn't that important, but the rest of the information is important.

Why go to all this trouble?

## THE PAYOFF

Did you know that you can reduce your spray buff time by 40 to 50 percent by using a 300/350 RPM machine instead of a 175 RPM machine? We just called this fact to the attention of a client doing a lot of spray buffing, but with no plan regarding size and speed of machine. We took our inventory, saw a problem and all we had to do was switch

machines. Doing so saved a lot of hard work and time.

If you are hand-mopping 15,000 sq. ft. of hard floor, you can increase your production by 2 1/2-times by using a 24/26-inch batter powered automatic scrubber. If you are mopping a fair amount of area, maybe two or three times this amount, your savings really adds up.

How about vacuuming carpet with a 16-inch wide vacuum cleaner instead of a 12-inch? You can save approximately 60 percent of your time or labor by using the 16-inch. There are many other examples like these.

## START YOUR INVENTORY

Once you study your inventory, you may find some never-used or very seldom-used machines. This equipment may be used for trade-ins on new equipment. Ask your supplier for recommendations and proposals.

Most of your suppliers have figures and forms to help you document your savings. If not, ask them to get you an International Sanitary Supply Association Cleaning Time Estimator booklet. This booklet will help you figure your savings, and it's free.

Remember: You cannot manage what you cannot measure. So start your inventory now. Look it over, ask for suggestions from you suppliers and start you savings plan today.

If you have any questions, just drop me a note. Good luck and good cleaning.