



Hard Floor Care That Makes Retail Shine - A Holistic View

The retail shopping environment continues to change and so do cleaning strategies. In the past, cleaning was done during times when most shoppers were not frequenting stores but that has changed as 66 percent of customers now want to see more frequent cleaning as they return to brick-and-mortar retail.¹ Visible cleaning is now a must for retailers as clean and hygienic environments take center stage.

Over 91 percent of customers agree that they are more likely to have an overall negative opinion of the business if it is not clean,² putting store aesthetics in the spotlight more than ever. Floors are one of the first opportunities a retailer has to make an impression on customers in the store. A clean and hygienic environment leaves a lasting impression on shoppers and conversely, a dirty and unkempt store can result in loss of customers and potential revenue.

In the United States alone 72.3 percent of the total population uses social media.³ Many internet users spend more than 2 hours and 7 minutes on social media everyday⁴ with much of that time devoted to watching influencers and reviewing products. With a cell phone at hand nearly all the time, a quick photo or video can capture a filthy floor and be shared with a multitude of customers within seconds. Their negative experiences can quickly become a PR nightmare with over 85 percent of customers having said that they will not patronize a business with negative online reviews about its cleanliness² and over 72 percent of customers trusting business more after it is recommended by an influencer.⁵

The monetary value of a clean and hygienic retail space cannot be overestimated. The P&G Professional Consumer Cleaning Insights Survey states, "It doesn't matter how good the service is or how wonderful the employees are, it's how clean and fresh the establishment is that matters most for 92 percent of consumers when deciding if they will become a repeat customer."²

Consider how well your current hard floor care program meets consumers' high expectations for cleanliness. By implementing best practices for hard floor care, you can build, maintain, and measure a successful program that makes your retail environment truly stand out to shoppers.

91% 

of shoppers will have a **negative opinion** of the business if it is not clean²



Floor Care Program Essentials

In any hard floor care program, there are up to five key components: matting, dust mopping, scrubbing, burnishing, and floor finish care. In most retail environments, dust mopping and scrubbing should be done daily while burnishing is typically dependent on traffic and done periodically. Unanticipated problems—such as spills or wet areas—should be cleaned immediately.



Matting

Mats are the first line of defense against tracking dirt and debris throughout the store. They can reduce the amount of dirt tracked into the store by up to 85 percent when properly placed and maintained.⁶ Mats also save time and money by reducing the amount of spot-cleaning you have to do throughout the day. Therefore, place at least one mat outside the store and one or two mats inside the store entry to contain dirt. Be sure to budget for mat replacements.



Dust Mopping

Dust mopping on a daily basis is critically important, however it is also the most neglected step. Instead of going straight to a scrubber, run a dust mop first over the floor to remove lingering debris. Skipping this step can result in debris getting embedded in the scrub pads/brushes or squeegees, which then leaves streaks or water residue. To prevent frequent maintenance and additional costs, use a dust mop on the floor prior to scrubbing.



Scrubbing

Most retailers clean hard floors daily with a scrubber to remove surface soils and stains. Most of the time, this is done with mechanized equipment. For smaller retail spaces or sudden spills cleaned by mop and bucket, using a mechanized floor scrubbing machine (small space scrubbers or walk behind machines) makes daily scrubbing faster and efficient with minimal water. While scrubbing with larger equipment typically takes place after hours at night, you can also have a smaller scrubber on hand to nimbly clean spills or dirty areas that arise during the day.

As more and more retailers look to be good environmental stewards, they are turning to environmentally-friendly products and practices. **Eco-friendly solutions often turn out to be the most cost-effective, since they use fewer resources to achieve the same result or better.** For example, cleaning with detergent-free solutions can effectively remove soil without leaving a strong odor and chemical residue while allowing your employees to clean longer—and your floors retain a polished look with **simplified, ongoing floor maintenance.**



Floor Care Program Essentials

(continued)



Burnishing

The key is keeping your floors looking like new—and that takes shine. Your hard floor should receive daily or periodic burnishing to restore its shine without damaging the floor’s coating. Some retailers—such as grocery stores—burnish every night to shine and level out the floor finish after a day’s worth of microabrasions caused by heavy foot traffic. Burnishing can be done periodically if customer traffic isn’t as heavy.



Floor Finish Care

To keep floors at peak shine, a deep, restorative clean should be performed every few months to a year. For best results, you can choose to perform periodic maintenance or do a complete removal/topcoat application depending on the floor’s current condition. As floor finish shows wear, you can do a periodic deep scrub and topcoat to restore the floor’s shine. A complete floor finish removal and restoration can be done once a year or as required based on traffic and weather conditions. This involves removing the top layer of floor finish with embedded dirt and putting down two fresh coats of finish. Often, retailers perform the periodic scrub and topcoat in-house and contract out for the complete system removal and reapplication.

Battery powered burnishers are rising in popularity as a safer and eco-friendly alternative to traditional propane burnishers.

Remember your floor cleaning routine with D.I.R.T.

	DAILY	INTERIM	RESTORATIVE	TREATMENT PROBLEM AREAS
FREQUENCY	Every day	1-7 Days	3-12 Months	Immediately as needed
RESULT	Remove dirt	Restore finished floor shine	Remove worn finish	Clean spills or wet areas
ACTION	Scrubbing	Burnishing	Mechanically strip and add new finish	Scrub with compact machine



Making the Most of Your Cleaning Machines

Floor care equipment needs to be properly maintained to maximize the uptime of your machines. Maintenance, while it may seem secondary to the appearance of your floors, is the most important and often neglected part of a floor care program. If machines aren't functioning—or functioning poorly—that will be reflected in the appearance of your floor. What are the steps to take to keep your machines running their best?

Follow a Daily Checklist

Retailers with successful floor care programs follow a daily checklist that lists pre- and post-operational steps. Without checklists, you're likely to see tanks full of water and squeegees full of debris between cleanings. The most effective checklists are in the form of wall charts that are placed in the scrubber bay. They illustrate all of the maintenance steps for every piece of cleaning equipment you have. They should be easy to understand and translated into the language that reflects your cleaning workforce.

Once the equipment is cleaned, the checklist should alert the staff to plug in a machine and put it on charge. If they follow these steps every night, machines will look their best, last longer and cost less to maintain—which translates to operational savings.

Conduct Preventative Maintenance, Avoid Costly Break Downs

Often, retailers clean on a "run-to-fail" basis, meaning they wait until their equipment breaks before calling the service provider. Conducting routine preventative maintenance is the key to minimizing overall operating expenses. It ensures that machines are running to the manufacturer's specification, which maximizes uptime and cleaning performance. Equipment manufacturers offer a range of preventative maintenance programs to keep their machines up and running.

Equipment breakdowns are more costly than preventative maintenance. Typically, a manufacturer has a preventative maintenance program where a technician visits your store and performs scheduled maintenance so your equipment continues to work properly.

Keep Parts in Stock, Purchase OEM Parts

It's always wise to keep some parts on hand such as squeegee blades, brushes and pads for your scrubber and HEPA filters for a burnishing machine. If you don't keep parts in stock, look for an equipment provider that can deliver these consumables within a couple of days to minimize machine downtime. It may be tempting to purchase look-alike parts, but doing so can cause the equipment to be out of spec and underperform. OEM parts are the best choice to keep your equipment running at its best.

Avoid breakdowns on Black Friday and beyond.

It is especially important for retailers to have preventative maintenance done on their equipment prior to busy times like the holiday season.



Measuring the Success of Your Floor Care Program

Quarterly business reviews and on-site audits with your cleaning equipment provider holds both the vendor and the retailer accountable. It should be viewed as a partnership with continuous improvement as the goal on both ends. It's also an opportunity to learn if there's issues that need to be addressed and where the program might be falling short.

For instance, are you getting the discount program savings you expected? Are preventative maintenance programs being leveraged to maximize uptime? Are daily checklists being followed to enhance machine performance?

Data-Driven Decisions

Gathering data about your machines is another way to measure your program's success. A key priority for 71 percent of in-house facility managers is improved productivity, and many don't have clear strategies to address this issue.⁷ One reason for this discrepancy is that they don't have accurate data to determine where productivity might improve. Especially in large retail chains with hundreds of stores, each facility manager is left to draw their own conclusion—leading to inconsistent standards of cleanliness from store to store.

Business intelligence metrics are increasingly employed to diagnose operational efficiency issues and help optimize the use of available resources. These asset management solutions provide the opportunity to monitor:

- Overall cleaning costs
- Machine usage, including average daily use
- Critical alerts that require immediate attention
- Trends and outliers, and pinpoint opportunities for improvement
- The progress of specific organized efforts to increase productivity

Data driven cleaning fleets achieve higher productivity and higher customer satisfaction⁸



Notes:

¹ Marianne Wilson Editor-in-Chief. (2020, May 8). Survey: Cleaning is key to making consumers more likely to visiting stores again. <https://chainstoreage.com/survey-cleaning-key-making-consumers-more-likely-visiting-stores-again>

² Procter & Gamble (Ed.). (2017, November 2). P&G Professional Survey Reveals Nearly All U.S. Consumers Consider Cleanliness When Deciding Whether or Not to Return to a Business. Business Wire. <https://web-a-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.hclib.org/ehost/detail/detail?vid=6&sid=c4aca271-b6bf-424a-b5b2-1249b278693a%40sdc-v-sessmgr03&bdata=jnNpdGU9ZWVhc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=bizwire.c81504120&db=keh>

³ Kemp, S. (2021, February 10). Digital in the United States: All the Statistics You Need in 2021. DataReportal – Global Digital Insights. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-united-states-of-america>

⁴ Paige, C. (2021, April 13). 140+ Social Media Statistics that Matter to Marketers in 2021. Social Media Marketing & Management Dashboard. https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-statistics-for-social-media-managers/#Social_media_usage_statistics

⁵ Saleh, K. (2018, April 11). The Importance Of Online Customer Reviews [Infographic]. Online Reviews. <https://www.invespro.com/blog/the-importance-of-online-customer-reviews-infographic/>

⁶ Engel, J. (2021, April 7). Winter Floor Care Tips for Facility Managers. Cleaning & Maintenance Management. <https://www.cmmonline.com/articles/how-to-keep-floors-clean-in-winter-and-reduce-costs>

⁷ Cleaning & Maintenance Management. (2021). In-House/Facility management Benchmarking Survey Report. https://www.cmmonline.com/wp-content/uploads/cmm-fm-survey-2021_full.pdf

⁸ Press Ganey. (2016). Environmental Services: Delivering on the Patient-Centered Promise. https://www.pressganey.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/pg_compass_one_whitepaper_final.pdf?sfvrsn