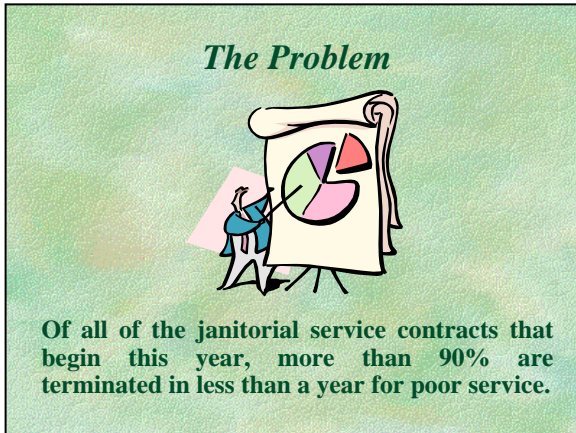


# How to Choose a Competent Janitorial Service

## (The 3 P's of Performance)

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It is indeed a sad fact that of all of the janitorial service contracts that begin this year, more than **90%** will be **terminated in less than a year** for poor service. Consider for a moment the importance of that statistic. What does it mean? It is slap in the face of the janitorial industry no doubt, but it is even more. This statistic means that less than 10% of companies choosing a janitorial service are successful in choosing a service that provides a long-term solution. Those are pretty poor odds for success. If the chances of surviving a surgical procedure were less than 10%, it is likely that the operation would never be undertaken. In war, if the odds were less than 10% in completing a mission, the team would never embark. Yet, managers undertake the mission of selecting a competent janitorial service against these astounding odds. **This obviously begs the question, what is so hard about choosing a janitorial service?**

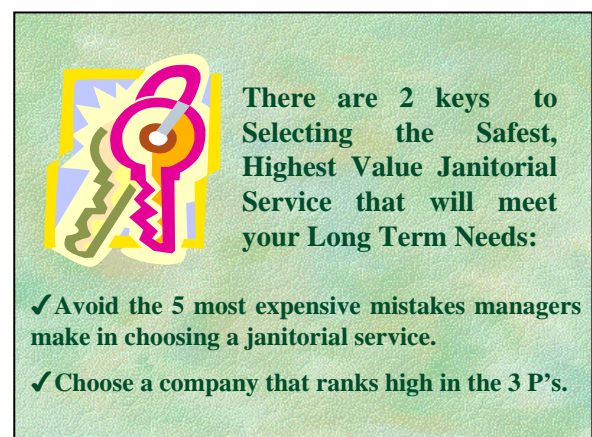
There are a number of possible answers to that question. Possibly the biggest reason revolves around economics. The cost of entry into the janitorial business is very low.

And since most people consider the janitorial business a “no tech” business, thousands are in the business that simply

don't know what they are doing. They fail to understand the reasons companies even use janitorial services. There is a lot of incompetence in the industry. Many of these small contractors are extremely personable and very good sales people. Their only flaw is in their inability to put together and manage a program that will deliver consistent results over long periods of time. How do you avoid these janitorial services?

There are 2 keys selecting the safest, highest value janitorial service that will meet your long-term needs. First, avoid the 5 biggest mistakes managers make in choosing a janitorial service. And second, chose a company that ranks high in the “3 P's” of performance.

The 3 P's will be very familiar to experienced managers. The 3 P's stand for People, Policies and Procedures.



## The 3 P's of Long Term Performance Are:

- 1** People
- 2** Policies
- 3** Procedures

### People:

There have been thousands of books and courses written on human resources and, specifically, the topic of selecting personnel. Selecting cleaning personnel should not be left to chance, yet many companies have no formal, written process for recruiting and selecting cleaning personnel. Statistics and common sense conclude that the more sophisticated a process is used in selecting cleaning personnel then the higher the success rate will be and the fewer exceptions will occur.

### People:



*Selecting cleaning personnel should not be left to chance!*

Our company uses nine different filters to eliminate personnel who might have low odds of success. This is what we have found to be successful:

When a potential cleaner calls in from an advertisement we do not answer any questions but instead have them listen to a pre-recorded message about our company and program.

This is about a 4-minute recording. At the end of the recording they are invited to attend an orientation meeting where their questions can be answered. This eliminates some people who want to do things their way and who expect others to follow *their* agenda.

In the orientation meeting our program is explained in detail along with the rest of the steps that must be completed in order to work with our company.

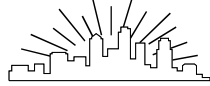
### *Cleaning Personnel Selection Filter*

- Respond to Advertisement: Hear Recorded Message
- Attend an Orientation Meeting
- Pass Criminal Background Check
- Fill Out Interview Questionnaire
- Provide 3 Letters of Recommendation
- Complete the Home Study Course
- Purchase the Approved Equipment
- Complete the Hands-on Training Class
- Read & Sign: Contractor Agreement, Quality Control Policy, Contractor Affirmation & Dispute Resolution Agreement



The very next step is to pass a criminal background check that eliminates people with a background of theft, violence or drugs. The candidate is asked to pay for this background check with the understanding that if they fail the background check their money will not be refunded. We have found this eliminates a group of people who know their backgrounds will not pass. We are constantly amazed that the very people who are eliminated through the background checks are in many cases working for janitorial companies who don't check.

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The next step is to fill out our interview questionnaire which demonstrates the ability to communicate in English and express ideas in writing. Next, they provide 3 letters of recommendation from people they know and who will put in writing that they have a history of doing what they say they will do and are dependable. The people writing the letters must include their contact information as well.

The next step is to complete a home study course that consists of listening to 4 hours of “less than entertaining” cassette tapes and filling out a work book. This demonstrates that they heard our process and procedures and were able to transfer those thoughts to paper. It also demonstrates the ability to complete an unpleasant task which they may not feel is necessary. Most of these people have cleaned or are cleaning for other companies and consider themselves to be ‘experienced’.

Next they have to purchase the approved equipment. We have found that people who own their own equipment make better cleaners and they take better care of the equipment as well. Carpenters, plumbers and electricians all own the personal tools they use. Experience has shown us that when equipment is provided it isn’t respected or maintained nearly as well.

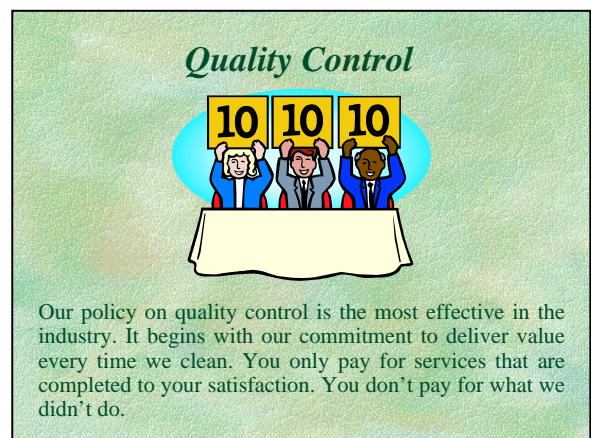
Next the candidate must complete a “hands on” training class where they demonstrate that they can use their equipment and our processes properly. The last filter is to go over and sign the required paperwork. This paperwork describes in detail the cleaners’ duties and the consequences for failing to perform those duties. The whole process leaves no room for misunderstanding and sets the relationship up for easy management in the future.

This is our formal program for selecting our cleaning personnel. It is working well for us. Other companies may have a different way of selecting their personnel. Our advice is to select a company that has put their process in writing. If the process isn’t in writing, it probably isn’t followed, evaluated, and regularly improved.



## Policies:

Policies are extremely important. Policies will dictate how decisions are made within a company. A quality control policy is a comprehensive but concise document that takes into consideration every possible outcome in operations and provides a course of action for each possibility.



The fact that a company has a written quality control policy that makes sense demonstrates that they are operating their business strategically rather than just tactically. Strategic planning requires thought, planning and careful consideration.



Tactics are the things we do to carry out a strategy. If a well-planned strategy is not in place, then tactics have no guidance.

In that situation, decisions about personnel and quality issues are made “on the fly” every time they come up. People who aren’t doing their job well stay until a manager has had “enough”. How much is “enough” varies from day to day and from decision to decision. Well-managed companies have these decisions made in advance, from the top, so that there is no confusion at the tactical level. Make sure the company you choose has a written quality control policy that makes sense. We have included a copy of our quality control policy at the end of this section.

## ***Procedures:***

**Procedures should be well thought out and highly defined.**

Make sure the janitorial services you consider have highly defined procedures that include both the equipment and the cleaning chemicals that will be used .

*Fewer variations in procedures mean fewer variations in results.*

## **Procedures:**

The foundational principle of Total Quality Management (TQM) is to bring a process into statistical control by eliminating all variation in the process. The next step is to measure the results and then introduce one innovation at a time to improve the results. The key is to have a valid benchmark to compare to the results produced by the introduction of the innovation to determine if the innovation was beneficial or detrimental to results.

Variation in processes and procedures causes variation in results.

Our experience has demonstrated that variation in cleaning processes, cleaning chemicals, equipment, training, supervision and management can all impact quality either positively or negatively. That is why well-managed companies have highly defined processes and procedures. You will notice that in our proposal the procedures are highly defined even including the products and equipment used in the process. The goal is to eliminate all unwanted variation.

Make sure the janitorial service you choose has highly defined procedures that include both the equipment and the cleaning chemicals that will be used. The more explicit and highly defined the procedures are, the better they will be followed. It is also easier to discover non-compliance early with highly defined procedures. Fewer variations in procedures mean fewer variations in the results.

## **The 3 P’s Are Great Predictors of Long Term Success.**

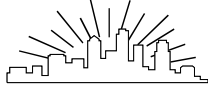
- ✓ Better People
- ✓ Better Policies
- ✓ Better Procedures
- = Better Service**

***It takes all 3 working together!***

## **Summary:**

The 3 P’s are great predictors of long term success. Better people, better policies and better procedures will produce better service. But it takes all 3 working together.

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These 3 fundamental parts are like the legs on a 3-legged stool. When all 3 are in place and working, the stool is stable and dependable. If any one of the legs is weak or nonexistent, the stool ~ or the janitorial service ~ will fail.

**So, how do you:**

- Make the safest, highest value choice?
- Avoid the 5 most expensive mistakes?
- Insure the company you select ranks high in the 3 P's?



*Use a Janitorial Service Selection Checklist*

So, how do you make the safest, highest value choice, avoid the 5 most expensive mistakes and insure the company that you select ranks high in the 3 P's? We suggest you use a Janitorial Service Selection Checklist. The following 6 points have helped many managers make the best choice for their company: