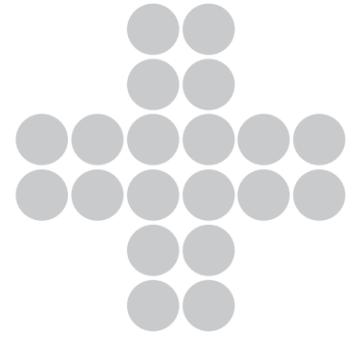


Got Restroom Issues? You're Not Alone



Facility managers, building owners, property managers and integrated facility management companies all have one main concern: satisfied tenants.

Since restrooms are among the top three generators of tenant complaints, keeping them clean and well stocked is key. In fact, 80% of global facility managers know that their office restrooms influence tenant satisfaction. It is not surprising that there are widespread efforts to elevate restroom standards.

According to Mark Brennan, Property Manager at Ten Penn Center in Philadelphia, "Tenants look at three things: lobbies, elevators and restrooms. That's where the biggest impressions are made."

A World of Possibilities

Globally, most facility managers surveyed aspired for restrooms to be more than just a place for people to 'do their business.' In fact, one in three global decision-makers feel restrooms are a reflection of how well facility managers care for their tenants. Some even believe restrooms broadcast a message that says, "We are premium and strive for the best."

Facility managers everywhere realize that office restrooms have a significant impact on tenant satisfaction — and they definitely know that complaints about them are a point of pain for both managers and building cleaners.

Slightly Different Priorities

While global building or property managers and facility managers have similar concerns, there are a few differences.

Building owners and property managers have to make sure their building makes a good first impression to attract prospects. They take a more holistic approach to operations with an emphasis on costs and

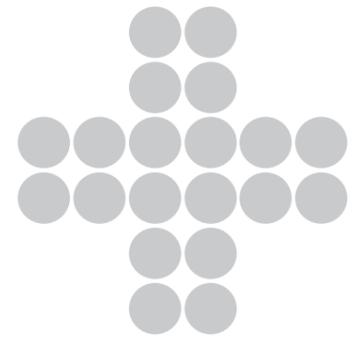


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budgets. Facility managers tend to focus on ensuring day-to-day operations are running smoothly, and reactively fix problems as they occur.

However, building and maintaining a desirable image for their building is a top priority for both types of managers. In the restroom, that can prove to be a challenge.

Office Workers Don't Always Speak Up

Though facility managers possess many talents, they are not clairvoyant. Most office workers surveyed globally express some level of frustration with the restrooms in their workplaces. Between one-fifth and one-half of office workers say they are dissatisfied with the restrooms in their buildings yet rarely file a complaint.

The reasons for complaints vary from country to country. Common criticisms range from toilet seats that are visibly not clean, non-working toilets and sinks and unpleasant smells, to dispensers that are not working properly and ugly tile grout.

And throughout the world, odor issues consistently have an impact on employee perceptions of cleanliness.

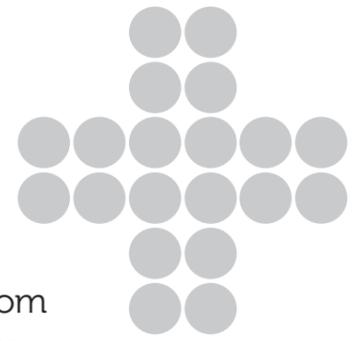
One big reason people want clean restrooms? They don't want to come in contact with illness-causing germs. A facility manager of 30+ buildings in Asia states that he takes 100% responsibility for minimizing the spread of infection in his buildings. "I was working as a facility manager in Hong Kong when SARS broke out," he says. "That changed the way washrooms were set up. There was a big push for automated washroom devices because nobody wanted to touch anything anymore. Everything started having sensors on them and we now provide hand sanitizer for tenants."

Managers Get the Chance to Vent

Anything but relaxing, a day in the life of a property or facility manager brings rapid-fire problems and opportunities. In the midst of managing everything from HVAC issues to tenant requests, restroom complaints can become a daily pain.

"I have trouble keeping my team motivated because they sometimes suffer from depression," admits the facility manager of a Brazilian banking organization. "Everybody brings problems to us, not solutions. When we do a very good job people forget to say that we've done a good job. I have to tell my team not to expect that."

Nearly 40% of global facility managers surveyed feel that employee behaviors cause numerous frequently occurring problems. "Tenant habits and behaviors can certainly have a negative impact on the overall appearance of our restrooms," says Russell Copeland, Senior Facilities Manager at DTZ. "If there's water all over



the sink and paper towels on the floor, it creates a false perception that the restroom isn't clean. The truth is, the cleaners could have been there five minutes before."

Facility managers surveyed averaged 7.3 restroom-related complaints per month, and many more in larger buildings. Managers also have to deal with problems with restroom fixtures, cleaning labor and training. It's no wonder that 23% of restroom issues, on average, are recurring — and that most all facility managers surveyed say it's important to reduce that number.

The Secret to Satisfying Tenants

The answer is simple, according to Alex Wilkins, Head of Facilities at Manning Gottlieb OMD in London. "People just expect things to run smoothly," he says. "I have a 'thanks' folder and there's nothing in it. I don't need taps on the back because if you wait around for those you will wait a long time. I just love the variety of the job, the people and the challenges."

"If the place is secure, warm, and has the appropriate facilities in good working order, people are happy — then I'm happy. If I dropped dead now, a few people would be sad but come Monday, people would expect the coffee maker to work."

Facility and property managers tell us the main contributors to a tenant-satisfying restroom include: frequency of cleaning, creating a comfortable environment and keeping countertops and other surfaces clean.

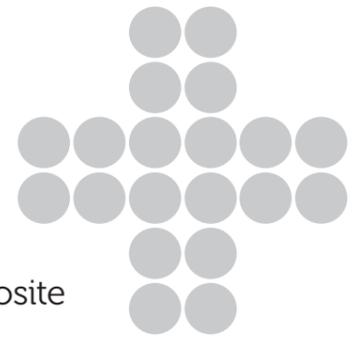
That means frequently picking up towels and debris, keeping dispensers fully stocked, and creating a positive experience with attractive fixtures, dispensers and quality products. Other essentials for having a tenant satisfaction focus: staying on top of dispenser refills, maintaining soap dispensers that don't drip and creating an image-building, visually pleasing restroom experience.

Management Points of Pain

The most significant challenges encountered by facility managers surveyed around the world focused on a few main problem areas: supplies, keep floors and surfaces clean, staff efficiency and inventory management.

Their main issues with supplies included keeping restrooms stocked, overuse of product, product quality, and dispensing problems that can result in scraps on the floors and excessive use. Cleaning is an ongoing struggle, especially in high-use restrooms. In addition to general cleaning, even graffiti and vandalism can be problems.

To keep restrooms well stocked, managers have to determine how and where supplies are stored and how new supplies are ordered. Supplies for different dispensers also have to be coordinated.



Why Work on the Restroom?

For employees in English-speaking countries, improvements in the restroom reflect more favorably on the facility manager than the employer. In Latin America and China, the opposite is true. In any case, improvements can reduce complaints, improve worker and tenant satisfaction – and make life easier for both property and facility managers.

Toward that end, one innovative facility manager for a major U.S. manufacturer has created a heat map of complaints and work orders. “We’ve color coded the areas where we get the most complaints,” he says, “So we can focus on improving those areas.”

Among the managers surveyed, interest is strong in benchmarking building performance, especially restroom costs and amenities with satisfied tenants as the ultimate goal. Kimberly-Clark Professional* is working closely with our global customers to help achieve that goal.

By inspiring companies to think “exceptional,” Kimberly-Clark Professional has become a global thought leader for business, providing trusted expertise that elevates the work experience by empowering professionals. Kimberly-Clark Professional* continues its commitment to understanding the wide-ranging impact of the office restroom with innovative research – and with sustainable solutions that create Exceptional Workplaces*.*

[Click here to see how you measure up.](#)

Sources:

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