

# Cleaning In The Community

## Janitorial Training Takes Off in The Town of Normal.

In May of 2012, The Town of Normal Facilities Management Department decided that it was time to review training procedures for custodial staff.

After a critical review it became clear that the existing program, although reasonably comprehensive, was a bit out of date and insufficiently executed.

We felt that the best way to start rebuilding was to first determine our goals for the outcome and then identify the essential components.

We set out to establish a benchmark for performance, provide our staff with the fundamental and advanced knowledge required to succeed as professionals, make it meaningful beyond our department, and reach into the community.

The program core of absolutes included current best practices, relevant information, progressive educational models, industry recognized merit, academic components that incorporated hands-on learning, and it could not be affiliated with any specific product or vendor.

With this list of criteria to guide the search, we set out to find a program that would meet our expectations.

### Heartland Community College

I contacted the Customized Training Department at Heartland Community College to enlist their help.

I chose Heartland Community College because it is a highly respected institution with resources specialized in helping organizations develop training of this type.

Upon initial contact I shared our list of goals and absolutes.

Over the course of several months we worked through the challenges of creating a program that met all of our expectations.



In October of 2012, the Customized Training Department recommended the Cleaning Management Institute (CMI) program and had located a highly capable trainer through a neighboring community college.

As I researched their recommendation, I found that the CMI program did in fact meet all of our criteria and included the added benefit of in-house Trainer development.

They described the program to me and suggested that if properly set up they may be able to offer college level vocational credit to participating students in addition to the nationally recognized CMI credential.

This piece of the program would more than satisfy the goal of making the effort meaningful beyond the Facilities Management Department as it would truly become an investment in the future of our employees.

The Basic Custodial Technician and Advanced Floor Care programs were set up as separate and progressive classes.

### Cleaning Challenges

The Town of Normal has many of the same challenges one would expect to find at any organization when it comes to custodial operations, but we have a few facilities that introduce some unique operational challenges.

A multimodal transportation center, children's museum and a historic theater represent a few of our more challenging facilities.

We also serve Police, Fire and Public Works among other facilities.

All of our facilities have unique operational conditions which press our staff to be efficient and effective in their duties.

Facilities Management at the Town of Normal is a 24/7 department that relies on professionalism, communication and cooperation to deliver our "Commitment to Service Excellence."

The training program has helped us to recognize inefficiencies and streamline our operational practices.

We have implemented the corporate custodial closet ideology and modified many of our cleaning methods to align with best practices for healthy environments utilizing environmentally-friendly products.

One of the primary benefits is that our staff can now take comfort in knowing that each member of the team, regardless of experience, has the same fundamental knowledge and the tools they need to do their work.

### Greatest Benefits

Beyond increasing our efficiency, one of

the greatest benefits I have witnessed is that our staff has taken ownership of the fact that they are professionals performing essential duties.

I have seen a shift in conversation among staff.

Surface level topics evolved into in-depth and thought provoking discussions which led us to implement new products and equipment.

I am approached regularly by staff with suggestions for ways to improve our department.

We encourage our staff to take ownership of their facilities and bring recommendations to the group at regularly scheduled department meetings.

We place equal weight on Supervisors to listen and implement viable suggestions.

I believe knowledgeable, confident and supported front-line staff have the ability to take the organization to the next level of excellence.

This program has validated that belief.

### Special Recognition

The training program was implemented in January of 2013.

We had 100 percent participation within our department.

We met once a week for four hours over the course of about six weeks.

The curriculum was rigorous and meaningful enough to warrant time between sessions to digest information.

In between sessions we applied what we had learned and formulated questions to bring back to the classroom.

Upon completion of the program Town Administration felt that the accomplishment was worthy of public recognition.

The entire Facility Management



In terms of performance, this training will serve as a benchmark to ensure staff is meeting baseline expectations and help us to recognize others that are exceptional performers.

The occupation requires a variety of skills that go far beyond the technical nature of the job.

We believe that individuals well suited to these occupations that are armed with the tools they need to be high performers can have very successful and rewarding careers.

A skilled and efficient workforce provides a great service at a great value to the community we serve.

### Training In The Community

As a result of our decision to have the program reside with Heartland Community College and not with the Town of Normal, it became available to everyone that can access the local community college system.

If there is a need or desire for formalized professional custodial training anyone can contact the Customized Training Department at Heartland Community College and set up a course.

Students that successfully complete the course will receive college-level vocational credit and nationally-recognized credentials.

I believe that this program has the potential to give individuals in the community a leg up in competing for future employment opportunities and gives organizations easy access to a quality training resource.

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