

Green Building... Green Cleaning... Green Washing?

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In today's facilities management (FM) market, achieving Green Building Status has become vital. According to Matt Sena's *Green Industry Analysis 2017*; "Green industry practices not only enjoy favorable public sentiment and the psychic income of a lower carbon footprint, but increased cost savings, supportive government policies, and ever-increasing profitability as well." In an attempt to benefit human, animal and environmental health, many companies have invested in the design, construction or refurbishment of their buildings. To do this they have done everything from updating the types of bricks and cement used, to the functioning of their cooling and heating systems.

However, despite the amount of capital that has been invested into creating a clean and healthy work structure, using green building practices, many companies are unaware of what type of cleaning and hygiene products they or their contractors are using, and whether or not these cleaning products meet the Green Star eco profile.

Common cleaning products consist of petro-chemicals. These products emit dangerous Volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which have a proven negative impact on the environment (and on human health). According to the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Research and Development's *"Total Exposure Assessment Methodology (TEAM) Study"* (Volumes I through IV, completed in 1985); "TEAM studies indicated... they can expose themselves and others to very high pollutant levels, and elevated concentrations can persist in the air long after the (cleaning) activity is completed." Further, these chemicals have a negative impact on waterways as well as on human health with conditions such as contact dermatitis and the triggering of asthma attacks. Petro-chemicals are also known to bring about sick building syndrome.

Using these cleaning products will decrease a building's GBCSA status. "However, this status can easily be increased by using cleaning products that meet the Green Star eco Profile," confirms John Coetzee, CEO at Green Worx Cleaning Solutions "After six months of using truly green cleaning products, companies can qualify for 3.5 points towards their next GBCSA assessment. Companies that use cleaning products that meet the Green star eco Profile will inevitably benefit the health of their building, staff, visitors and above all the environment."

Health and environmental benefits are not the only reasons why green cleaning products are a

better option. "Switching to these products can reportedly reduce the volume of cleaning products by as much as 50 percent and reduce the acquisition cost of cleaning products by 30 to 50 percent," adds Coetzee. "This affords companies effective cleaning solutions at less risk and lower costs. The increase in health and safety has the potential of reducing staff absenteeism and job injuries, as well as increasing alertness, resulting in better job performance."

Statistically *Green Worx Cleaning Solutions* Green Cleaning products offer: a 60 percent lifetime cost savings for mops; 95 percent reduction in chemical costs associated with mopping tasks; a saving of 638 hours per year for each worker or approximately R103 477,50 in wages; and a 46 percent reduction in quaternary ammonium chloride purchases.

"The typical cost saving and volume of chemical reduction with these products have been measured at 28 percent reduction in products used (liter/Kilogram) and 30 percent cost reduction for a Five Star Boutique Hotel," confirms Coetzee. "A Six Star Green Building Accredited Hotel will experience 46,4 percent reduction in products used and 44,7 percent cost reduction, while a household of four people will enjoy a 63,4 percent reduction in products used and 51 percent cost reduction."

It is not necessarily enough to be a green building, companies in today's FM market need to ensure that their buildings are sustainable as well. A green building is often not a sustainable building, yet a sustainable building is always a green building. A sustainable building has no impact on the environment while a green building focuses on incremental steps to solve known and measurable problems with current practice.

"Unfortunately, many companies today are not really sustainable and end up simply paying lip service to the concept of being green - and are often unwittingly green washing," concludes Coetzee. "Companies that are cleaning green are effectively working towards creating an environment that is green *and* sustainable while benefiting from the numerous health advantages and unimaginable cost savings."

For more information or to book a free consultation please contact John Coetzee on john@green-worxcs.co.za or 011 708 6626.

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Boilerplates:

Green Worx Cleaning Solutions is ISO 14001, Global GreenTag, SABS and Green Building Council of South Africa (GBSCA) certified and supplies innovative, environmentally responsible, biotechnology products based on the use of natural microbes and enzymes. In such, Green Worx supplies green cleaning and sanitation consulting and solutions, pollution control and environmental remediation products to industrial and commercial entities, as well as to consumers. Green Worx prides itself on its associations with global leaders providing innovative, effective and high-quality products and solutions to meet specific customer needs.

In 2016 Green Worx was presented with the Award for runner up in the Green Technology Innovation category of the Mail & Guardian (M&G) Greening the Future Awards. In the same year, the company won the 2016 South African Frost & Sullivan Award for New Product Innovation.

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