

environmental

# Get Your Tenants Excited About **GREEN PRACTICES**

by Arely Castellón



**O**perational efficiencies are important to property managers, yet they do not control some of these efficiencies because tenants are directly responsible for many results. In the course of business, we have observed many great property management initiatives and practices that encourage operational efficiencies as a result of tenant engagement, which makes the overall operation smoother and cost efficient. This is especially applicable when trying to implement green or LEED initiatives. This month will outline some efficient environmental tenant outreach programs that have been observed in the properties we service. Why have we noticed, you might ask? Truly efficient outreach programs touch every aspect of building services, including the cleaning and maintenance.

The first step, of course, is scheduling a tenant meeting in order to inform, educate, and garner support, so as to impart project ownership and pride in their facility. Green building initiatives reach deep into the local community. First, the overall performance of the building improves with tenants supporting the initiatives, and, many times, the tenants' employees take these best practices into their home, which expands the positive

environmental impact. A simple question to ask is "What is my building doing to reduce its carbon footprint and how can my company help?" This leads to all types of interesting discussions helping tenants understand the importance of their personal involvement. Some of the most interesting green topics are as follows:

### **Water Upgrades**

Some of the newer technologies provide water savings that are almost transparent to the end user because they are unable to determine if the quantity of water being released from the fixture is one gallon or five. The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) estimates that commercial buildings in the United States are responsible for 13 percent of the national water consumption, yet with good practices, this percentage can be decreased.

What technologies are being used in your building? Faucet aerators are a great way of conserving water, providing an average of 50 percent water savings. Yet an end user does not see a difference in the output. Sensor faucets provide greater conservation. Low flush toilets and urinals provide similar results. Many property managers share their statistics on water usage prior to and after the conversion to more efficient water fixtures. Given the drought issues we face in south Florida, building occupants can feel good that they are contributing to water conservation in their community.

### **Green Cleaning**

Maintaining a clean building environment is critical to employee health and the environment. Adhering to sustainability practices has direct health benefits, such as improved indoor air quality, which has been shown to alleviate asthma and allergies. The USGBC estimates that we spend 90 percent of our time indoors, so it is important to make sure the air is clean. Interestingly, many of us are concerned about airplane air quality, yet flights are relatively short. Eight hours per day in an office building is something many of us don't think about, yet it is an important health component.

Conservation also comes into play with cleaning, especially when using chemical concentrates versus ready-to-use products. The associated manufacturing, packaging, and transportation costs are significantly less. Water conservation is automatic when using new mopping technologies that eliminate the need for five-gallon mop buckets and the constant refilling and disposal.

Green cleaning doesn't just happen. Property managers must make the commitment for the betterment of the building, its occupants, and ownership.

### **Recycling**

In our experience, tenants can make this effort truly successful, so streamlining the process to make it easy will facilitate the implementation.

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“T

here isn't enough time in the day.”

- “Computers haven't saved us any time at all.”
- “I've missed two appointments because I forgot to sync my calendars.”
- “Too much work and not enough day.”
- “I have heart palpitations every Monday—well, actually, they start on Sunday.”
- “I haven't had a real vacation in years.”
- “I can't ever really get away from the office. No matter where I go, I am on call to the cell phone, iPad, or laptop.”
- “I don't get paid enough for this.”
- “I eat lunch at my desk.”
- “I need another me!”
- “I've bought every get-organized system there is and nothing works.”
- “I have to get more organized.”

Most of us have said these things sometime during our careers; maybe even today! Getting organized seems to be a universal problem and there are many who offer advice, solutions, and systems—for a price!

But, what if getting organized wasn't about the perfect system or having more time or hiring an assistant manager? What if getting organized was more about being focused and staying in the game? Getting organized may be no different than the way an athlete prepares for a game. Athletes are certainly focused, and, obviously, those who have good time management, outside the game and inside the game, become the winners. Coach Luke Freeze, Leesburg High School, Leesburg, FL, says his players have ten disciplines for staying focused and developing their full potential. If we were to adapt these ten disciplines to facilities and property management, they might look like this:

#### 1. Love your job.

If you hate to go to work every day, you need a change of attitude or a different job. It is amazing how a smile, words of gratitude, and a “please” and “thank you” will improve your attitude and the attitudes of those around you. For most of us, the only real control we have in our lives is over our own attitude! Change it, or be miserable.

#### 2. Develop training disciplines.

Keep the main thing the main thing. With so many demands on your time and so many issues needing your attention, you must have a way of prioritizing what you do first, second, and so on. There are four types of demands. Learn to distinguish between them and act accordingly.



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