

Rawlins – making ‘Remove, improve, protect’ more sustainable

4 years ago



Established over 50 years ago, and renowned as the UK’s leading supplier of cleaning equipment, [Rawlins](#) now has a new Managing Director. With the retirement of James White, Werner du Plessis is embarking on a plan to take the business in a new and more sustainable direction, while also offering a new and important service.

“As I take the reins at Rawlins, I am excited to announce that clients will soon be able to lease our range of innovative and highly efficient cleaning machines on a 2-, 3- or 5-year contract,” says Werner du Plessis. “At a time when everyone is working their way through the cost-of-living crisis, this new leasing option will support clients with lower budgets who need to closely manage their cashflow, while achieving exemplary cleaning results.

“In addition, we are making online purchases more efficient, as well as moving more sales, training and consultations online. This is an important part of my long-term sustainability goal for Rawlins, as we used to drive thousands of miles to demonstrate equipment. While site visits and demonstrations will always be needed, I firmly believe that much more can be done online.”

Meet Werner du Plessis

Rawlins’ new Managing Director is 37-year-old Werner du Plessis, who was born in South Africa and moved to the UK in 2003. He began working in the UK in the security industry, and from 2010 became involved with both hard and soft service facilities management.

“Looking back, it seems inevitable I would end up running a business which has a key role to play in maintaining health and wellness in the workplace,” says Werner du Plessis. “While completing various

health and safety courses from 2010, I became interested in the wellbeing of people in the workplace and began to understand the crucial role the facilities management industry had to play. I became a facilities manager in 2015 and started my NEBOSH courses with the British Safety Council.

“I met James White in 2017 and was inspired by his vision to educate the market on scientific cleaning, and that there is a better way than the mop and bucket. I joined Denis Rawlins Ltd in 2018, believing that we could make a real difference by changing people’s minds on the way they clean. It has been a phenomenal journey so far, seeing that our industry is open to change.

Remove, improve, protect

Pre-Covid, few realised that cleaning is the removal of unwanted and invisible soils. The World Health Organisation warns that 17 million people die a year of infectious diseases.

“We are not medical professionals, but I firmly believe we can make a dent in these numbers by keeping our buildings safe and clean,” says Werner du Plessis. “Our mission is to innovate, educate and supply scientifically proven cleaning systems that are better, faster and, where possible, cheaper. Equipment that is designed to raise the value of the cleaning industry and the dignity of the worker.”

Rawlins is a consultative business and is keen to advise and educate to ensure that FM’s fully understand the range of issues and cleaning challenges they face, and then use the right equipment to gain the very best results. It focuses on quality and reliability while also seeking to encourage innovation.

Rawlins’ range of equipment and services is based around “the five high needs of a building” – Entrances; Washrooms; Daily Floorcare; Health and Safety (such as spill-response); and Speciality Areas (such as kitchens).

“Our three-step process is crucial in achieving proper results: remove, improve and protect,” says Werner du Plessis. “The most important part is to remove all unwanted soil, and that includes everything we don’t see, such as viruses, bacteria, and germs. The traditional mop and bucket approach simply moves dirt around and the technology hasn’t evolved for centuries. We take a scientific approach to removing visible and invisible soil by using high-flow, fluid extraction – using water, rather than chemicals.”

Improving sustainability for the cleaning and FM sectors

“Sustainability is hugely important to us and to our clients,” says Werner du Plessis. “Rawlins’ most important product lines include the Kaivac and REN™ Clean ranges, alongside Mats 4 U – all of which can positively impact on a premises’ sustainability credentials.”

Werner believes the cleaning and FM industries can improve their sustainability planning and delivery through smart investment and need to change their minds on the way they specify and purchase machinery, to reduce their carbon footprint, use less water and energy and stop landfill.

“Our new leasing option will enable more businesses to benefit from the advantages of the innovations we have introduced. We have innovated to ensure that the industry can use less chemicals, have less engineer callouts, and use battery operated machines.

“Many cheaper machines fail and end up in landfill within 12 months, while for instance, our more

expensive Mastervac Tub Vacuum will be in operation for up to seven years. Similarly, the Kaivac AutoVac Stretch™ can replace several machines on-site by changing the process and will never need an engineer or replacement for up to seven years.

“The Kaivac UniVac® and AutoVac Stretch™ cleaning systems have recently earned Green Seal’s Certification of Environmental Innovation, based on reduced environmental toxicity, waste minimisation, use of verified environmentally preferable products, and conservation of energy and water. The two machines use at least 65% percent less water and cleaning solution than competitors, while reducing pollution by reusing cleaning solution up to seven times.

Mats 4 U

“Mats 4 U is a really interesting part of Rawlins as our service combines improved safety with sustainability benefits,” says Werner du Plessis. “When visiting any premises, the entrance matting is the first thing you see, and often presents the biggest challenge for cleaning. Beyond their safety role in limiting slips, trips and falls, if the mats are not properly cleaned, they actually help to spread dirt through the whole building.

“Many FMs choose to hire mats and have them changed on a weekly basis, but we have a more environmentally friendly solution, as our mats can be perfectly cleaned using the Kaivac range of hard floor care machines. Using Mats 4 U and Kaivac improves a premises and businesses’ carbon footprint through removing unnecessary transport and the water and energy wasted through off-site cleaning.

“As my new plans for Rawlins come into effect, I am looking forward to meeting existing and new clients and explaining how our scientific approach, coupled with our stated sustainability goals can benefit their businesses.”