

The Future of Cleaning Initiative: A Ground-breaking Collaboration

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[The British Institute of Cleaning Science](#) (BICSc) and the [Cleaning & Support Services Association](#) (CSSA) have successfully completed a ground-breaking project aimed at exploring the future of cleaning. This collaboration marks a significant milestone in the cleaning industry, reflecting a shared commitment to embracing innovation with confidence.

Driving Change Through Collaboration

In 2024, BICSc and CSSA embarked on this ambitious project to provide valuable insights through independent trials and scientific results. “This collaboration between the British Institute of Cleaning Science and the CSSA reflects a first for collaboration between industry associations and our shared commitment to help the cleaning sector embrace innovation with confidence. Together, we are futureproofing the industry through practical, evidence-based insight,” said Paul Ashton, CSSA Chairman.

Project Scope and Methodology

The project aimed to:

- Determine the productivity of different types of current machine ranges.
- Provide clarity on the changes to productivity brought about by robotics.
- Evidence the effect on the standard of cleaning achieved from the usage of these machines and chemicals.

· Determine whether the use of this equipment or chemical range made changes to air quality and pathogen count.

Suppliers were approached to assist in trialling different types of equipment, chemicals, and processes. The following suppliers participated in the project:

- Numatic
- Birkin
- Killis
- Diversey
- Karcher
- Orion Eco

The trials took place at the University of Surrey, with each manufacturer given six weeks to establish their equipment and/or chemicals. The BICSc Cleaning and Hygiene Audit App was used to assess changes in cleanliness.

Challenges and Key Findings

Despite the project's ambitious goals, several challenges impacted the results, including management changes, staff engagement, and external consultant recommendations. The cleaning inspection results were mixed, with no clear correlation from the starting point to the completion results. However, valuable insights were gained, such as the importance of engaging operatives in the process and the need for effective change management.

Quotes from Industry Leaders

"The trial has shown us that success lies not just in product performance but in the readiness of people and processes to adopt it," said Paul Ashton, CSSA Chairman.

"Management of change is key to the success of the process. Where staff are not engaged in the process, the installation of new equipment or processes is doomed to failure," added Denise Hanson, Commercial Director, BICSc.

"How we manage change needs to be the biggest consideration, whether it is technological, chemical, machinery, or even providing training. Without clear guidance, leadership and ongoing support, change will not be effective," commented Neil Spencer-Cook, Group MD, BICSc.

Expert Insights

Professor Andrew Kemp, Head of the Scientific Advisory Board at BICSc, emphasised the importance of scientific rigour in the trials. "Our approach ensures that the findings are not only practical but also scientifically sound, providing a robust foundation for future innovations in the cleaning industry," said Professor Kemp.

The study carried out by Professor Andrew Kemp concentrates only on the data provided by the two new technologies that were kept separate from the main study:

- Advanced Photocatalytic Oxidation (APO)
- Photocatalytic solution (PS) The results of this study can be found [here](#).

Looking Ahead

Both BICSc and CSSA are committed to driving innovation and professional standards in the cleaning industry. The CSSA is keen to expand its role in overseeing governance, innovation, and professional standards, while BICSc remains dedicated to protecting cleaning operatives with professional standards.

In an industry worth £60 billion and employing 1.5 million people, trade body partnerships like this are crucial for driving progression and producing ideas for future guidance. The CSSA is committed to developing guidance on managing technology transitions and welcomes engagement with manufacturers to share lessons learned and ideas for future guidance.