

# The Six Costly Illusions of Janitorial Service Providers



## **Illusion #1: The janitorial company that offers the lowest price is the one you should hire.**

Often times, the price you are quoted may not equal what you eventually wind up paying. If you've ever hired a cleaning company before, you may have been the victim of slight of hand, false advertising, or bait and switch tactics.

You probably learned the hard way that some companies offer a cheap price, and then once you've hired them, they trick you into paying more at every turn. These unsavory companies cast a dark shadow on the entire janitorial industry with false promises and misleading advertising. But, you can avoid getting tricked.

A common way that savvy customers/companies get exactly what they agreed upon is to request a bid bond. A bid bond insures that the vendor bids according to the scope of work represented in an RFP (request for proposal). If the cleaning company breaks its promise to perform based upon contracted services they can be held financially liable. This removes some of the risk of hiring an unethical company. If your janitorial company won't agree to provide you with a bid bond, search for another cleaning company.

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## **Illusion #2: When all of my cleaning services are bundled, I save money!**

These days, bundling is everywhere. Bundles are offered by insurance companies, cable/internet/phone companies, clothing companies, fast food chains, electronics retailers and more. In theory, when a company combines several of its products or services and then discounts individual prices to create a "bundled price," both the company and the customer benefit. That's assuming that the company upholds its end of the bundle bargain.

Many janitorial companies offer to bundle various services together in one contract—combining nightly cleaning services with carpet cleaning, hard-surface flooring cleaning and other services. The deception comes when companies don't provide you with a clear and specific list of tasks as well as a detailed time line indicating when each task will be completed. These firms attempt to cut corners and provide less than promised, with little or no accountability. Over time, tasks slip through the cracks and your facility doesn't get the attention needed to remain a clean and healthy environment.

Ask your janitorial service provider for a detailed schedule indicating specific dates and times that each of your contracted services will be performed and completed. Once you have the schedule, hold the company accountable to delivering the agreed-upon services in a timely and thorough manner. Inspect what you expect. If they hesitate or refuse to provide you with such a schedule, it may be time to find a new janitorial company. It is very likely that you are not getting everything you have paid for.

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### **Illusion #3: Employee Turnover... No Big Deal; We'll Just Hire Someone Else to Replace Them.**

According to a recent cleaning industry study, the average employee turnover rate for most janitorial service providers is about 200%. SO, what's the big deal? What this means is that in any given year, a company's entire cleaning staff has been replaced by a whole new crew...two times. The frequent cycle of hiring and training, hiring and training, hiring and training new staff leads to an inexperienced work force that never really becomes proficient or in tune with your company's cleaning needs.

With this revolving door approach, it's hard to imagine that the customer is getting the most for their money. In fact, another recent study found that mis-hires cost companies anywhere from 5-25 times the employee's base salary; as the company spends lots of time and money recruiting, interviewing, training, and providing benefits. Now, multiply this by the

number of employees who come and go each year and it becomes clear that high turnover creates a financial strain on a company.

Subsequently, companies attempt to make up for these losses by reducing cleaning budgets and employee wages, neglecting essential cleaning equipment, and ultimately passing these costs on to you and charging too much for sub-par work.

ServiceMaster TBS is not like most janitorial service providers. We foster a culture where our employees are not treated like a company asset or a number, but rather like friends and family. We value what each individual brings to the table and give him/her opportunities to shine. We invest in our people's lives, train them well, and empower them to do whatever it takes to make customers happy.

As a result, we have a work force that is ambitious, courteous, thorough, and professional. They like what they do, which means they stick around. This means you won't be seeing new faces every few months while your facility's cleaning needs are unmet. Our low turnover rate also means that we do not have to pass along any unnecessary costs to you. We charge you a fair price and you get exactly what you pay for—quality janitorial service.

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## **Illusion #4: Phoning It In — All Janitorial Companies Perform Services With Their Own Employees**

The birth of your children, your son's graduation, your daughter's wedding—what do all of these events have in common? Each is an important event that you prioritize and plan for and requires your personal involvement and attention. If you didn't show up to any of these events, you'd have more than some “splainin' to do”.

Now...imagine calling up a friend, colleague, or a perfect stranger and proposing to pay them to walk your beautiful daughter down the aisle on her special day; to smile with pride and applaud as your son is handed his diploma; or, to hold your wife's hand and cheer her on as the doctor shouts, “Congratulations! It's a girl!” Sounds absurd doesn't it?

Well...this is exactly the approach that many janitorial service providers take with their customers' cleaning services. Instead of prioritizing the customers' needs and completing the job themselves, most janitorial firms subcontract their work out to smaller “mom and pop” businesses and take 10-20%—or even more—right off the top. This makes it nearly impossible for the people who are actually doing the cleaning to effectively complete the job, as the amount they are paid won't even cover the expense or the time necessary. More often than not, this approach results in inconsistent performance, employee turnover, and overall poor service. When a company sells you a service, then hands the job off to another service provider without proper oversight, accountability, and intensive training, the most important people suffer—the clients.

All of ServiceMaster TBS' janitorial services are handled in-house by our highly trained, professional cleaning technicians. We don't “phone it in.” Our staff takes pride in their job and completes their tasks according to your needs. With regular inspection and on-site supervision, we monitor each job to ensure that the job is done right. This guarantees your satisfaction and fuels a consistent cycle of improved performance—leading to a sparkling clean and healthy environment for your employees.

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## **Illusion #5: Recruitment and Hiring—Janitorial Companies Always Hire "The Best of the Best."**

From Philadelphia, PA, to Cambodia, companies and organizations from every sector and every service have one thing in common: employees. Companies operate because people with certain skills, knowledge, and talents occupy positions within a company that drive and support that organization's goals. It is safe to say that a company is its employees. Without employees to do the work, a company would not exist. Janitorial service companies are no different.

So, here's the question: Why would companies hire employees that would be anything less than the best for a position?

It just doesn't make sense. There are a truckload of reasons why it is "bad business" to hire a disposable workforce. But the main reason—as we discussed in Illusion #3—Companies that avoid paying a little more to attract experienced, high quality employees end up paying a lot more in the long run. And the cost of endless recruiting, hiring, and firing inevitably gets passed on to the customers. The customer also pays by having to deal with janitorial service employees who are poorly trained and unreliable.

For ServiceMaster TBS, hiring the best employees possible is a no-brainer. We use the Topgrading recruitment system to find employees in the Philadelphia area who are going to stick around, do great work, and treat our customers the way they are supposed to be treated. Topgrading helps companies find, recruit, and keep employees who are "A Players." Through an extensive interview process and accountability-based reference checks, employers can weed through the field of applicants to find the pick of the crop.

We go through all this trouble so that our customers get the best experience possible from our happy, engaged and highly skilled employees. We don't take shortcuts...period—not in our hiring and recruitment; not in our cleaning services; not in our business dealings. That's the culture we've created and passed along to our employees. This means, you always get the best people doing their best work.

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## **Illusion #6 - The Janitorial Company with the Highest Price is the Best**

Janitorial service companies have a job to do: keep your facility sparkling clean. Some Philadelphia area janitorial companies want you to think that they achieve this goal by cleaning every inch of your facility, every day. Therefore, they charge you to clean your entire facility, every day. Fair enough, right?

Not quite...

Think about this: in your own house, every time you clean, do you clean the entire house every time? Or—like most people—do you clean the higher traffic areas more frequently (because they get used more)? You still clean the lower traffic areas, but less often because they don't get as dirty. It's just common sense.

The same approach goes for janitorial and commercial cleaning. You don't need to clean every inch of your facility, every day. It is a waste of time and money.

ServiceMaster TBS takes the common-sense approach. We clean the areas of your facility that need to be cleaned...when they need it. Our professional cleaning staff works from a detailed checklist that outlines daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning tasks, based on the specific needs of your company, facility, and budget. We also tackle special cleaning projects as needed.

We do what we say we're going to and we only charge you for what we do. This means you are not paying for services that you don't really need (or aren't actually getting).

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*ServiceMaster TBS—serving Philadelphia, PA, as well as Camden, Burlington, and Gloucester counties in New Jersey—prides itself on providing you with outstanding janitorial service and ensuring that we deliver exactly what you expect from us—every time. No tricks. No deception. For general janitorial service advice, or to find out more about ServiceMaster TBS, feel free to contact us. We're always happy to chat.*