



## **PLASTIC LINER INITIATIVE: LOWER EXPENSE AND IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENT**

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### **CHALLENGE**

Can a retail facility manager (RFM) reduce the labor required to execute waste disposal and eliminate the expense for waste receptacle plastic liners (and their negative effect on the environment) at the same time?

### **BEST PRACTICE**

The costs associated with waste disposal can be significant. It seems RFMs are constantly wrestling with different ways to reduce these costs. In addition, any process that can pull more plastic receptacle liners from the waste stream is good news for the environment and the retailer's bottom line. One retailer recently figured out how to both reduce waste cost and eliminate plastic liners at their corporate facilities.

For this retailer, it typically took the cleaning company nearly five hours every night to execute the waste removal process for more than 250 cubicles, each containing two waste receptacles—one for general waste and one for paper. The fact that the receptacles for general waste were made of a metal mesh material further complicated the issue by creating the situation where liquids or food waste could easily leak through to the floor and possibly damage the substrate if a plastic liner was not used. Therefore, it was a requirement to line each of these metal mesh receptacles with plastic liners. While servicing the retailer's corporate office, several opportunities to improve the waste disposal process presented themselves.

To combat the cost/environmental challenge and eliminate the time necessary to empty the more than 500 receptacles, along with relining the 250 plus metal mesh receptacles, a best practice initiative was developed. The resulting best practice involved a three-part process change.

1. Strategically place larger 55-gallon general waste receptacles in each department for employees to dispose of their general waste produced throughout the day
2. Remove all the general metal mesh waste receptacles from each cubicle, leaving only one receptacle for paper
3. Eliminate the use of all smaller receptacle plastic liners

### **RESULTS**

The best practice had an immediate impact once implemented. All of the employees at the corporate office accepted the new program. The cleaning company was able to reduce their time spent on waste disposal and focus on higher impact areas to provide a cleaner environment for all. The office manager was able to eliminate the expense for small receptacle liners. All of the cubicles became less cluttered due to this initiative. Finally, the negative impact on the environment was reduced.

### **VERIFICATION OF EFFICIENCY AND SAVINGS CAPTURED**

- The office manager historically spent approximately \$12,000 per year on small receptacle plastic liners. This expense was eliminated
- The larger receptacle liner cost did not increase, as all small receptacles were already being combined into larger liners for disposal. No additional expense incurred
- The cleaning company saved an average of two hours per day. Hours were reallocated towards other opportunities. This also resulted in a cleaner working environment
- The environmental impact was priceless