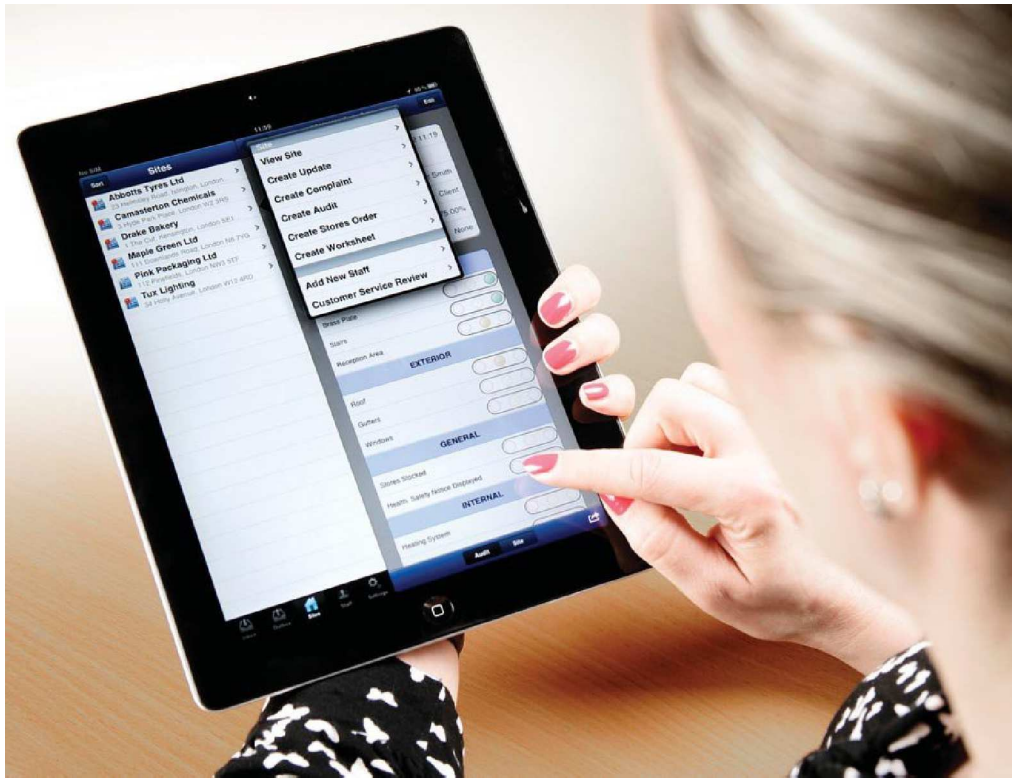


# 21st century cleaning

Technological advances in computing and communications are changing the face of the cleaning industry, enabling contract cleaners to be even more flexible and responsive when looking after multiple sites. Alan Loukes, technical director of CleanLink, explains how the right technology is helping companies clean smarter, faster and more efficiently.



Can you remember what life was like before the advent of the 'app'? For many, now, it would be unthinkable and unbearable to go back to those days when a mobile phone was simply a mobile phone and nothing else. The 24-7 nature of today's society makes huge demands on our time, and technology has developed to help us cope. Consumer products have undoubtedly taken the lead in this, paving the way for businesses to adapt and reap the benefits of smarter, lighter and quicker devices that keep us in touch, and control, wherever we are.

But the benefits brought by state of the art technology such as smartphones and iPads aren't simply 'nice to have' - they are essential tools that help contract cleaning companies to maintain and grow their businesses in the midst of unpredictable economic times. Businesses in all sectors have to be more flexible and responsive in order to weather the current storms - and the cleaning industry is no exception. With so many different demands being made on contract cleaning, finding systems that enable managers to be more efficient, providing a smoother-running, more modern way to service their clients, is crucial to survival and success.

Developed solely for the contract cleaning industry, CleanLink's Site Manager software includes all the functions needed to operate a cleaning company, including

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payroll, invoicing, worksheets, stores, quality control, budgets, risk assessments, actions, machinery, documents and contacts. Thanks to the introduction of CleanLink's app, the data needed by managers 'out in the field' to manage their sites is now also available on iPhone, iPad, iPod, Android tablets and smart phones.

The app allows companies to manage their locations remotely, enabling head office to monitor activities, keep track of progress as it happens, and update clients regularly to maintain high satisfaction levels. It allows managers to perform onsite audits, place orders for supplies, log requests from customers, receive instructions, record client satisfaction rates and take photographs. Access to information such as staff, client and site details, specifications, pay rates and hours allocated is also available at the touch of a screen.

#### **Innovative technology improves efficiency**

Clients rely on contract cleaners to provide the very best service on time, every time so tools that can help them increase efficiency while maintaining the highest standards are welcome additions, and they can also increase competitive advantage.

Even the most 'traditional' of brands is embracing this brave new world. Fortnum

and Mason has its own Facebook page, and Pringle, founded in 1815 and the once beloved knitwear brand of golfers but now a high fashion label, has joined the Twittersphere. Contract cleaners are finding that clients are attracted by the hi-tech element in delivering contracts, and by embracing this technology they can offer a better service, and bag more business. An added bonus is that it also helps companies to deliver on their 'green' aims, promoting a more environmentally-friendly way of working by using less paper and cutting down on unnecessary travel costs.

In the past 'back office' systems have been hindered by their lack of compatibility. With separate software for each individual task, such as payroll, invoicing, etc. problems arose because these systems couldn't talk to each other. Site Manager puts everything that a cleaning or facilities management company needs to run its contracts into one place, and managers are then able to take it with them, wherever they go, on Apple or Android devices. It means they can update records as soon as issues happen or audits are completed, and provide feedback to clients in the quickest way possible, helping to keep customers happy.

#### **Delivering results**

Ecocleen, a contract cleaning and soft services company with 19 years' experience, services around 600 sites for 400 customers across the UK, employing roughly 700 people. With a wide reach across many different sectors - including education, healthcare, car showrooms, offices, leisure centres and manufacturing businesses such as depots, factories and warehouses - it is keen to keep up the momentum of its growth, while maintaining and improving standards for its established clients.

Paul Smith, Ecocleen's commercial director, is no stranger to hi-tech wizardry, having spent 19 years in the Air Force. He felt strongly that robust systems and processes, driven by the latest technology, would give Ecocleen the level of detail and immediacy of response that it needed to set it apart from other commercial providers - and that's where CleanLink came in.

"The iPad app was the real driver for Ecocleen," said Paul Smith. "We have 12 regional offices and over 20 managers, so we needed something that was easy to handle and incredibly responsive, helping with customer communication and the audit trail. It gives our managers control and reduces the administrative burden on them because it ties all our systems and processes into one package. From Ecocleen's point of view, the key benefits are visibility of information, immediacy of response and financial control, allowing managers to keep an eye on budgets and improve profitability while keeping our clients better informed as well. Our customers gain the advantage of a system that links in with and confirms our commitment to ISO 9001, which helps us to deliver even higher quality results."

[www.cleanlink.co.uk](http://www.cleanlink.co.uk)