



OBSERVE AND REPORT

Rick Stoor, Managing Director of Templa, explains how business management software is helping cleaning companies deliver previously unachievable levels of client service.



In contract cleaning, client satisfaction is principally delivered through investment in staff training and the monitoring of cleaning standards. However, the added dimensions of an efficient helpdesk and a secure portal through which clients can view key contract information are now giving cleaning companies a vital extra edge in their efforts to retain contracts.

Standalone software packages may be able to deliver these benefits individually, but when the individual software applications form part of an integrated contract management system, it is definitely a case of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts – in other words when they each share data from a single centralised contracts database to deliver their benefits. The critical area of quality auditing is a good example where outdated or standalone systems are not making life easy for contractors.

Common Problems With Quality Auditing

Many cleaning company directors I speak to complain that their quality audit system is so inflexible as to be not worth the paper it's written on – literally in some cases. Here are a few reasons why.

- The form itself, whether electronic or paper, is too rigid in its layout. For example, unless you are auditing

a very small area of a large office building, how can you record a single score in a box entitled 'toilets' or 'hard floors'?

- One building can contain several different accommodation types, for example an office, a manufacturing floor and a canteen. This makes it difficult to use the same audit sheet throughout the building as different areas may have different specifications.
- Clients will often place great importance on a feature of their building that is unique to their site. For example, a brass plate by the front entrance is the most important item to them, but where is that on your audit sheet?
- There is no flexibility in the scoring system. What if you want to have pass/fail instead of 1-5?
- There's no way of checking whether audits have been done in line with the agreed frequency.
- There is no way of knowing what the scores are until the results are manually updated to a spreadsheet days or weeks after they are returned to the office. Even if the audits are done on a mobile device using a standalone package, the results may have to be physically emailed back to the office for manual analysis.

- To send the client the results of a month's worth of audits means laboriously collating the data and emailing it, by which time the results are out of date anyway.

So how does integrated business management software rise to this challenge?

The answer is that the interaction of different modules in an integrated system can help achieve an all-round step change in your satisfaction ratings. The table below shows how the quality auditing module, as part of our TemplaCMS integrated contract management system, can drive enhanced levels of client satisfaction.

THE SET-UP

When a contract is set up in the software's Contracts module the following information is loaded in relation to the integrated Quality Audits module:

- The frequency of audits, for example weekly or monthly. This can include varying frequencies by site if it's a multi-site contract with many buildings of differing size or importance.
- The type of scoring templates. For example a leisure centre can have a different scoring

template to an office or a school. The template for a building can be as detailed as you choose, containing several different rooms or areas and any number of scored elements within each room or area.

- The scoring system. Do you want 1-5; pass or fail; or red, amber, green?

THE IMPLEMENTATION

At the start of each month the admin team generates the audits required across the company, dropping the details into the software's Workflow system for automated distribution:

- Field managers then receive their schedule on their mobile devices.
- As they complete the audits, managers record the scores, as well as adding photographs of any serious cleaning or maintenance issues if requested.
- Completed audits can be signed for by the client on the mobile device and are synchronised back to head office.
- Audit failures, at either individual task or overall site level can automatically generate a requirement for a re-audit within an agreed timeframe.

COMMUNICATING THE RESULTS

Controls are in place to determine what information goes to clients and in what format:

- Audit KPI results can be summarised in different ways, for example average score, percentage score, or total passes and failures.
- Audits can be automatically emailed to clients or be set to 'hold for investigation' if showing a serious standards shortfall or failure.
- Using the secure Customer Portal module, the results of audits can be presented and viewed graphically by the client, across their portfolio, in the comfort of their own office.



NVIRO USES TEMPLACMS AT A MAJOR NHS CONTRACT

In September 2015 Nviro took on the contract to clean the Totton Dialysis Unit, part of the Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust. The unit provides a comprehensive renal service to a local adult population of over two million.

EXPLOITING TECHNOLOGY

The Dialysis Unit is a mixture of clinic rooms, ward areas, hygiene areas, offices and circulation. It is cleaned seven days a week to a very high specification by a team of four cleaners who each look after a different section of the building.

Given the responsibility of cleaning at such an important location, it seemed like the ideal moment for Nviro to create a highly bespoke quality audit template using its TemplaCMS business management software.

Nviro recommended that their Service Manager, Jamie Salmon should perform audits jointly with the client, the Head Sister, and together they identified 88 different cleaning tasks across the building, each relating to a different aspect of the cleaning specification. All the tasks were loaded to the Quality Audit form and, at four pages, it is the longest quality audit form Nviro use anywhere in their 600 cleaning locations. Jamie allocates 45 minutes to each audit.

In terms of scoring, the audit template was set up with a pass or fail score for each task, reflecting the fact that there are no in-between measures. The cleaning is either done properly or not. The client then set a target of 95% as the minimum acceptable score, allowing failure on only four out of the 88 tasks before an automatic re-clean is triggered.

CLIENT AND CONTRACTOR BENEFITS

At NHS Totton the bespoke audit has had two important benefits. Firstly it has upped the ante for Nviro, causing each member of the cleaning team to focus very clearly on their own area and take increased personal care over it. Secondly it has made the auditing process much more meaningful, making it possible to home in on any deficiencies in a way that isn't possible with generic audits which just talk about 'floors, edges, walls and toilets' and so on, without identifying specific locations. Jamie is pleased and so is his client who receives an automatic email containing the results of all audits, leaving her to get on with the important job of looking after patients.

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