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CUSP (CU I&E) Submission: University-wide Project for Green Cleaning Chemicals [1]

Throughout all campuses, each group responsible for cleaning has historically purchased cleaning supplies from whichever supplier they chose. There was no coordination among campuses or even among the various groups on a single campus. On Boulder campus, for example, Facilities Management, Housing and Dining, the University Memorial Center, and Athletics each purchased cleaning products independently of each other. There was, however, a common desire to use environmentally friendly cleaning products. What was lacking was knowledge of what constitutes a “green” product; a way to ensure that the products clean adequately; and, confirmation that the University was getting the best value possible. The Procurement Service Center took the lead in an effort to change the way custodial supplies were procured. Working together, Will James, PSC Purchasing Manager, Duane Tucker, Strategic Contracts Manager, and Michael Fox, PSC Strategic Sourcing Manager, brought together a cross-campus committee for the purpose of developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for green cleaning products. The project had several goals, including: establishing a System-wide contract for green cleaning products that each stakeholder group would use; reducing the variety of products purchased; providing products that were 3rd party certified to be green that also cleaned well; and, leveraging the University’s enormous buying power to reduce costs. At the stakeholders’ suggestion, paper products were added to the RFP though they were not required to be green.

It’s important to note that we were looking for a partner, not just some place to purchase products. We wanted a comprehensive program that included installation, consultation, and training. The RFP evaluation criteria were: 1) program plan (strategy); 2) project plan (tactics); 3) training plan; 4) sustainability program; and 5) pricing.

After initial review of by the Evaluation Committee of the nine responses received to the RFP, four responses were ranked in the top tier. A double-blind test was conducted on products from these four suppliers to determine product efficacy. The products tested were: glass cleaner, disinfectant, floor cleaner, and general (all purpose) cleaner. Each product was masked to disguise the brand. The Evaluation Committee, including the Purchasing Manager and the Strategic Sourcing Manager, and a Custodial Supervisor gathered in one of the resident hall’s communal bathrooms. Using new equipment (cloths, mops, buckets, etc.) for each test, the Custodial Supervisor cleaned various surfaces with each type of cleaner from each of the four finalists. The products were rated on a pass/fail basis – either the product cleaned or it didn’t. The Purchasing Manager recorded the results.

After evaluation and ranking of all criteria, including cost, the award was made to Staples Advantage.

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT THE UNIVERSITY?

As a result of this project and partnering with Staples, CU has extended its sustainability initiatives and promoting a healthy and productive learning environment, while lessening the impact on the environment. The four primary Staples cleaning products now being used are Green Sealed Certified and meet the EPA Design for the Environment cleaning products standard. Using 3rd party certified products helps in achieving higher STARS ratings. CU also benefits from Staples' next-day delivery, further reducing our carbon-footprint by consolidating its facilities and office supplies purchases into a single order. By leveraging purchasing power of the entire University system, we project a 23 percent annual cost reduction compared with the similar products previously purchased. This project is an example of excellent cross-campus and cross-department collaboration. When we work together to achieve a common goal, the results can be outstanding.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS:

Staples worked with departments on each campus to swap out old products with new, while simultaneously conducting on-site training for all custodial staff. As many custodial employees speak English as a second-language, Staples provided training materials in a variety of languages. The end goal – to create and enforce consistent cleaning practices university-wide – has generally been achieved. To date, UCB Facilities Management, Housing Services, and the Recreation Center are fully converted; and Athletics is transitioning. At UCCS, Housing Services, Facilities Management, and University Center are fully implemented. Additionally, this agreement is available for use by other entities, both public and private. To promote the use of green cleaning chemicals, Charlene Lydick, Associate Director of Procurement, and Duane Tucker, Strategic Contracts Manager, have given presentations on the process and resulting agreement to various local, state, and national audiences.

Submitted by: Charlene Lydick, Associate Director of Procurement, on behalf of Michael Fox, Strategic Sourcing Manager, Duane Tucker, Strategic Contracts Manager, and Will James, Manager, Purchasing Services

Groups audience:
Controller

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