



COMPANY:

The Offices at Mall of America

HEADQUARTERS:

Bloomington, MN

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:

3,000+



CLASS “A” AND INTENDED TO STAY THAT WAY

When The Mall of America (MOA), the largest shopping complex in the United States, broke ground on a 10-story office building attached to its retail space, competition for corporate tenants and facility management companies was fierce. Located in Bloomington, MN (a suburb of the Twin Cities), this 170,000-square-foot LEED-certified building features top-of-the-line finishes, a continuous band of windows, and balcony views of the St. Paul-Minneapolis area. Already, it's attracted corporate tenants from some of the Twin Cities' most high-profile companies.

The RFP for a building services contractor to handle the office building's housekeeping was highly specific, including many requirements that align with the ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) and CIMS-Green Building (CIMS-GB), including documentation requirements, HR stipulations, and streamlined business best practices that would need to align with MOA's huge operation. In the end, a total of five companies, including two national organizations and leading local contractors, bid for the high-profile job, but only two of these businesses rose to the top. Both were CIMS certified companies.

“We have high cleanliness standards,” says John Beach, Mall of America senior housekeeping manager. “The Offices at MOA is a class A office building, and we want to stay that way.”

With the help of Lance Witschen of Class 1 Consulting, Beach's team outlined an RFP that would ensure they found a contractor up to the task. The interesting thing about the bidding process for this particular job is that it highlighted the advantages CIMS certification can provide companies even before a contract begins. That's because the two companies that rose to the top were CIMS certified companies whose adherence to CIMS standards, such as keeping data to prove all claims, streamlining communications, and accurate estimating gave them a clear advantage.

“One of the reasons the proposals from CIMS certified organizations floated to the top is how the proposal itself was structured based on business and management best practices,” says Witschen.

In the end, the job at The Offices at MOA went to Major Metro, which is the union affiliate of Prestige Maintenance, a national building services contractor with more than 3,000 employees and extensive corporate office experience. Prestige Maintenance has been CIMS-GB certified since 2012. Jason Dinverno, the chief operating officer at Prestige Maintenance, was heavily involved in bidding for the job at The Offices at MOA. Along with Tim Potvien, Prestige's business assurance director and resident CIMS expert, Dinverno followed CIMS principles in crafting the winning proposal.

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— Lance Witschen
 Class 1 Consulting



Well-Documented Success

One of the core principles of CIMS is documentation. The standard teaches that a business should maintain all records of business continuity, such as tracking employee training and documenting employee policies and purchasing procedures.

“Major Metro focused on providing documentation in their proposal,” remarks Witschen, who reviewed the proposals for the job at The Offices at MOA as an advisor to Mall of America. Documentation was key to winning the bid, he believes, because, “There’s not a doubt in my mind that every person who they put on the job at The Offices at MOA was trained – and their training was documented. I don’t even have to call, check up, and worry about this at all.”

After Prestige became CIMS-GB certified, the company started to do a much better job of tracking and documenting everything they were already doing with training and HR. This included simple things such as creating a standard employee policy manual, where all rules, procedures, and regulations were documented. Having this document came in handy during the bidding process when Mall of America mentioned certain dress requirements in its RFP. Dinverno was able to provide excerpts of Prestige’s employee manual and company policies that aligned with those requirements.

“Instead of just saying, ‘Yeah we’re going to comply,’ we provided the specifics of our company policy,” says Dinverno. In addition, the proposal included excerpts from the employee manual concerning leave of absence, paid time off, and electronic device and personal phone call policies.

Dialed-In Bidding

A big part of the CIMS process is to be able to understand an organization’s standard process. This can have significant benefits in the bidding and estimating process. “Before we were CIMS-GB certified, there would be gaps in overhead,” recalls Dinverno. “And now we are a lot more dialed in. Some of that is a part of striving to be more aligned and better able to explain our tools.” One way the bidding and estimating process has become more accurate is through the CIMS practice of incorporating sales tax into these tools.

“Before CIMS, we were applying our cost for equipment and supplies without adding sales tax, and that had a negative impact on our bottom line,” says Dinverno.

In this bid, companies were required to provide equipment, supply, and chemical lists. Mall of America would purchase the chemicals, and the contractor would be responsible for equipment and supplies. Through CIMS training, Prestige was accustomed to pulling the actual specification sheets for each piece of equipment, which is exactly what they did with their bid. Doing this early on has a ripple effect throughout the entire company, making transitions in the case of winning bids much easier.

“We identified the equipment we were going to use and so accounted for it in our bidding and estimating tool more accurately,” explains Dinverno. “Once we were awarded the account, we were able to communicate with our whole team what exactly needed to be ordered so we could meet the timeline.”

In the case of The Offices at MOA, a quick transition was vital. After winning the bid, Major Metro had less than 3 weeks to get staffed and have equipment and tools on site. “If we had not accounted for all that we may have stumbled a while, using up our clock,” says Dinverno. Instead, once awarded the account, Major Metro had a complete supply and equipment list pulled and budgeted for, and all they had to do was order it.

Inspired by the structure and alignment taught by CIMS, Dinverno and his team are continually considering how to improve their implementation process. Once they are awarded a new account, the news is quickly circulated within the building – accounting knows the billing process, HR understands the background screening requirements (for example, MOA had badging procedures and background screening requirements), and purchasing get everything they need. It is all tracked through a go-live date with a clear goal.

“There are a lot of moving pieces to how we implement new business, a lot of people in different departments are working together so we’re all successful in the end,” says Dinverno.



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BEST TIP FOR COMPANIES THINKING ABOUT CERTIFICATION:

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Retention Rates Matter

John Beach at Mall of America was particularly impressed by the low turnover rates for employees at Prestige and its union affiliate, Major Metro. This, he remembers, really stood out against the competing bids. “Plus, they were able to prove that with statistics that they brought into their RFP interview,” he says.

Diverno credits CIMS with expanding the training available to Prestige employees and helping to retain employees longer. After Prestige became CIMS-GB certified, the company started incorporating a development component into its training curriculum. This provided employees with more career opportunities and professional expertise, while promoting engagement and lowering turnover rates.

“Wherever our workforce is receiving and has gone through more training, they are engaged with their manager, we definitely see a reduction in our turnover,” says Diverno. “And in those areas, our management teams are working in line with what CIMS strives to provide.”

CIMS-GB certification not only helped secure Diverno’s team this job, but it has also helped them exceed MOA’s expectations on the job. While the office building has only been open for a short period of time, the transition has been seamless, and Beach reports full satisfaction with their work. Thanks to a CIMS certified bidding process that set the team up for success from the very beginning, an engaged workforce, and excellent communication and business best practices, this working relationship is off to a promising start.

About CIMS and CIMS-GB

The Cleaning Industry Management Standard, or CIMS, was created “by the cleaning industry and for the cleaning industry,” and was developed specifically to apply to both building service contractors and in-house cleaning service providers. As such, CIMS deals with the unique issues faced by the cleaning industry and focuses on compliance requirements that were determined by experts in the cleaning field.

“CIMS provides contract cleaning companies the parameters of the core components that make a business successful. Achieving CIMS provides the opportunity for a company to prove their legitimacy to their potential client and dedication to running an effective operation,” says Brant Insero, ISSA director of education, training, certifications, and standards. While most programs in the cleaning industry measure knowledge or training, ensure products meet specific standards, or require that technical cleaning procedures meet set criteria, CIMS applies to an entire organization and focuses on management systems and service delivery processes. CIMS makes no product, equipment, procedure, or system recommendations, and each organization retains the flexibility to choose how to best meet the CIMS requirements.

ISSA, a not-for-profit organization and the leading association for the cleaning industry worldwide, and its partner, the American Institute for Cleaning Sciences (AICS), worked with a consensus-based technical committee to draft the standard, which was also subjected to full peer review. CIMS is based on universally accepted management principles and consists of five sections of management best practices: Quality Systems; Service Delivery; Human Resources; Health, Safety, and Environmental Stewardship; and Management Commitment. The first organizations to go through the process achieved CIMS certification in 2007. A sixth dimension to the CIMS standard - CIMS Green Buildings - was added in 2009.



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