6 Questions To Ask About Your Cleaning Supplier
Procurement of cleaning services is complex. How do you ensure that your cleaning supplier will deliver consistently high quality of service alongside long-term value?

Focus on the key issues:

1. Is quality of service a certainty?

You could be the reason your contractor is under-performing; poor service begins with a poorly specified and executed tender process. Without the right methodical foundation your contract will be built on sand and will never recover, only delivering an inconsistent, mediocre service at best.

Quality of service begins with a clear and comprehensive **Contract Specification**. Using descriptions and visuals, define the services required throughout your building. You will get a much better picture of the contractor by defining the output – service levels required, than simply the input – hours required. Ensure that price schedules are standardised for an accurate comparison.

Also at tender, it is recommended you or the potential contractor specify a detailed **Service Level Agreement** (SLA). This must reflect the Specification, defining everything from the frequency of managerial visits and inspections to accident investigation.

Without these essential foundations your contractor will be free to define the contract as he sees it, not as you want it, with undesirable results.

For Temco, the more detailed the Specification the better. We are happy to help prospective clients with Contract Specifications, often contributing invaluable details and viewpoints.

SLAs are embedded in our culture. They are created to each client’s specifications, taking every building’s unique requirements into account.

So our clients have full confidence that the service they need is the service that will be delivered.
Every contractor will begin a new contract with enthusiasm, but without the right procedures service will decline and complacency is inevitable.

The successful contractor needs a comprehensive **Quality Management Programme** to provide the objective physical checks to calculate the agreed statistical quality levels over the life of the contract.

In addition your contractor must define **Key Performance Indictors** (KPIs) to manage the contract. This will track and assess events under the terms of the SLA and report regularly in one clear, concise document that is always to hand when you are required to report on contract performance.

Every contractor claims to deliver high quality of service, but it is only through a well defined SLA combined with a meticulous Quality Management System and clear KPIs that it can be delivered consistently for the duration of the contract.

Quality Management and KPIs are in Temco’s DNA, providing clear validation of service quality and value.

Quality Management is underpinned by our exclusive UK use of SmartInspect™, an online tool that helps managers assess quality, create and record quality scores and generate reports for management to review quality performance with painstaking attention to detail.

KPIs are systemic, ensuring that every aspect of the contract is monitored, managed and kept under constant review to identify potential enhancements.

If you would like to see examples of our SLAs, Quality Management Programmes or KPIs please email us at: info@temco-services.co.uk
Are you really getting the service you are paying for? Probably not if your pricing is not totally clear.

**Transparent pricing** from the start of a contract minimises the chances of unpleasant surprises that will throw out your budget. If your pricing structure lumps everything together you might be paying for more cleaners than you are getting, your cleaners might be receiving very low wages or your contractor’s margin might be higher than you think.

In addition contracts evolve and offices change. Without transparent pricing you will have difficulty calculating the implications of change.

At Temco we share a complete breakdown of pricing with clients, including our profit margins. This ensures that you know what you are paying for at all times and demonstrates our commitment to our staff and technical development.

Benchmarking provides a valuable measure that can cut down on the need to retender too frequently.

Aware that contracts are dynamic, transparent pricing also ensures that changing spaces are easily priced, quantified and implemented.
Is their response proactive or reactive?

Do you see enough of your contractor’s managers? Do they make you work hard? Are you reacting to their problems, constantly on their backs about day to day issues?

Simply reacting to problems will never result in a high quality service. As the client, your role should be focused on contract development and enhancement at regular meetings, not operational issues.

It is an industry wide problem that managers are spread too thinly, so look at the level of management you expect as service levels are greatly affected by the quality and frequency of management visits.

The best suppliers provide managers who have the time to proactively identify and rectify non-performance before a problem occurs, eradicating the importance of response times and preventing any burden on your own workload.

At Temco, we have a high manager/contract ratio. Managers are well trained and given the time to understand clients’ needs so they can add value to a contract. This gives them greater job satisfaction so they stay in post long term and clients benefit from continuity.

Our processes and mechanisms ensure potential issues are highlighted before they affect the service. Our managers hold Dashboard meetings every week with staff, grading current performance of quality, operations, health and safety, environment and training. Traffic lights turn to amber if an area has potential for a problem, drawing focus until they turn back to green. This process aids communication, pre-empts faults and prevents the need for wasteful reactivity.
Lack of investment plagues the contract cleaning industry, locking it into a cycle of poor productivity and low expectations with predictably disappointing results.

Your cleaning supplier needs a culture that promotes the highest level of service from their staff, beginning with professional, structured, ongoing training, then equipping them with the latest machinery and the best materials. The result will be a culture of quality that is ingrained from top to bottom.

Lack of investment is a false economy; if your contractor neglects the care of their own staff, they in turn will neglect the cleaning of your building.

The recruitment and retention of high calibre individuals is one of our strengths. Our staff are fairly paid, intelligent, well trained and given the best equipment and materials. They are given the appropriate time and conditions to complete their work, giving them everything they need to do the job well, including the desire to do so. Our ‘Passport to Success’ programme incentivises staff to achieve career progression, whilst our bonus scheme is directly linked to performance and has a dramatic effect on attendance, retention rate and above all, quality standards.

As a result, our clients benefit from cleaning professionals who take genuine pride in their work, who demonstrate initiative and flexibility, and actively seek opportunities to excel. They get it right first time.
How seriously do they take compliance?

At its worst, lax compliance can have serious consequences. Without taking it that far it can tarnish hard won reputations and result in substantial fines.

To control compliance policies and procedures it is essential to understand, question and review them.

Every contractor will have a range of policies, including Health and Safety and Environmental, but this must be more than just ticking boxes. Implementation must be methodical, mirroring and matching your own policies and Corporate Social Responsibility goals to avoid conflict.

Similarly, staff vetting must be of the highest standards in these days when immigration fraud is ever more sophisticated and punishment for non-compliance more draconian.

Just as critically, high level compliance must cascade down to sub contractors, because their failure can reflect badly on your organisation too.

Each Temco site has tailored compliance documentation that integrates with the client and is kept under constant review. New starters receive an in depth, site specific induction supported by training in a Safe System of Work and promoted further in the Passport to Success programme. The result is that compliance is behavioural, not simply a sheaf of documents. Updates and review dates are identified within the KPIs to ensure systems identify and track the latest initiatives and legislation.

Our staff vetting processes are second to none, going above and beyond the UK Border Agency’s statutory requirements and including checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service.

All our compliance feeds down to sub contractors, ensuring that everyone within our contracts is managed to the same high standards.

If you would like to see an example of our compliance procedures please contact us at: info@temco-services.co.uk
In Conclusion

The six issues raised in this document reflect the principle issues raised by those who manage cleaning contractors.

To summarise:

• Understand your requirements and define them in the contract
• Ensure that systems deliver quality, consistency and performance
• Demand transparency – understand what you are paying for
• Enjoy the benefits of a proactive approach
• Look for high levels of investment
• Ensure compliance is cultural

We hope you find the information useful. If you would like examples of SLAs, Quality Management Programmes or KPIs or would like to explore any of these issues further, contact us:

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About Temco Facility Services

Temco Facility Services was launched in the UK in 2001 and is a division of Temco Services Industries Inc, a strong and diverse international Total Facility Management and Service Corporation, established in 1917. We have a proven track record in delivering substantial improvements to service quality and cost in a wide range of environments – from industrial and medical cleaning to daily office cleaning in commercial environments both public and private sector.

UK • Belgium • Netherlands • Luxembourg • USA

Services:
Daily office cleaning
Blue chip cleaning
Pharmaceutical cleaning
School and college cleaning
Industrial cleaning
Janitorial supplies and services
Washroom services
Windows
Carpet cleaning
Periodic cleaning
IT cleaning
Pest control
Recycling
Grounds maintenance