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# Industrial Soap Sales Strategies

By Cynthia Kincaid

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Most jan/san suppliers will find that selling industrial soaps is not necessarily hard, but there is something to be kept in mind when trying to make the sale: workers are sensitive to the kinds of soaps they use, and management is sensitive to the needs of their workers. To effectively sell industrial soap, distributors say providing on-site testing is essential.

“We place soap dispensers within the facility and make sure the employees like the soap before they make a change,” says



Denise Neff, director of sales and marketing for Scranton, Pa.-

based **Pennsylvania Paper & Supply**. “We put up a sample dispenser

on the wall with the cartridge of hand soap and let them use it. And then management will ask their people what the results were: ‘Did you like the soap? Did you not like the soap?’ On an industrial hand soap,



you most definitely have to go through the testing process.”

In fact, when Neff finds an opportunity to sell industrial soap, she orders samples ahead of time to be prepared for the on-site testing.

“I don’t even make the appointment until I order the samples,” she says. “In every instance where we have offered up industrial hand soaps, we’ve had to put them into test. We were not able to just switch.”

Because of worker preferences, soap testing can be tricky, so go prepared with different samples.

“Some workers will like one soap and some will like another, and finding a balance to make everyone happy can be challenging,” says Kari Hus, president of Santa Clara, Calif.-based **Pacific Janitorial Supply**.

Hus recommends taking and testing multiple soaps on-site; Neff agrees with this approach.

“Industrial soaps are driven by the need of the user,” says Neff. “In a manufacturing facility, whether it’s foodservice or heavy industrial, there could be, and usually are, two or three kinds of industrial hand soaps within that facility to make the workers happy.”

Of course, knowing the customer’s preferences and needs beforehand can save time and make soap testing much easier, so Hus recommends having an idea of what clients do and how often workers need to wash their hands before undergoing the soap test.

“Facilities will have different types of soil loads. Some are oily, and some are dirty, and heavier oils require a lower pH cleaner and degreaser,” says Glen Huizenga, sales leader at Spring Lake, Mich.-based **Nichols**. “You need to determine the circumstances because that will determine the products you’re going to need to test.”

While offering soaps with a variety of fragrances can play a role in moving soap products, Huizenga still finds removing dirt to be the major factor in selling industrial soap (assuming the product smells okay).

“You have to be able to show them that the soap cuts through the grease and grime,” he says.

When choosing among scents, currently, citrus or orange are the most popular fragrances for end users, says Huizenga.

In manufacturing plants. warehouses. foodservice facilities and even



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hospitality resorts, regular hand soap isn't always tough enough to cut through the grease and dirt found on workers' hands. Smart jan/san distributors will make it a point of stocking a variety of industrial soaps. And with the right strategy, it will be easy to make the soap sale.

*Cynthia Kincaid is a freelance writer based in Columbus, Ohio.*

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part 1: [Best Markets For Selling Industrial Soap](#)

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