

# HOW JANITORIAL TURNOVER IMPACTS YOUR BUSINESS

**UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE  
OF EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN  
COMMERCIAL CLEANING**



NOVEMBER 2024

**AM**  
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## WHY IS EMPLOYEE RETENTION SO IMPORTANT IN **COMMERCIAL CLEANING?**

*Employee turnover in the commercial cleaning industry is high, averaging around 200% and sometimes reaching as high as 400% annually.*

This means a janitorial company with 100 employees and a turnover rate of 200% can expect 200 new hires each year. It's a staggering statistic, but unfortunately not a new one.

Losing employees is *not only a huge distraction* for a cleaning company, *it's expensive* — especially if it happens regularly. Recruiting, onboarding, and training new employees increases labor costs and inefficiencies while decreasing customer ROI.

Learning curves for new hires are also a concern. Quality can suffer when tasks are missed or poorly executed, supplies are overused, or equipment is damaged. All of these issues create *extra costs that are often passed onto the customer*, who ends up paying more for less.

*What are the real costs of high cleaning staff turnover to facility managers? And how can commercial cleaning companies find and keep the very best people?*

*This white paper explores the turnover phenomenon within the janitorial industry by examining the following:*

<i>Why Cleaning Employees Leave</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>What Janitorial Turnover Costs You</i>	<b>5</b>
<i>Shifting Focus to Retention</i>	<b>6</b>

# WHY DO CLEANERS LEAVE?

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## Low Wages

Just like the businesses that employ them, **workers have a bottom line**. Competitive, or if possible, above-market pay with benefits is the first important step to retaining happy, satisfied employees. Wages can also vary depending on a facility's location. **Employers must adjust pay rates** to meet the expectations of qualified workers.

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## Location

Distance from home and available transportation are key considerations for cleaning professionals. If it's a struggle to get to work every day, it's very tempting to look for **employment closer to home**. That's why it's often more difficult to attract and retain good Team Members in areas where they don't typically live.

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## Lack of Training or Accountability

Comprehensive training programs are necessary for exemplary performance. Cleaners need to feel they have **the ability to succeed in their job**. Not having a clear understanding of expectations or duties is a recipe for failure and frustration for both the employee and the employer.

## No Incentives

**Recognition is the extra glue** that keeps an employee attached to a job. Incentives and rewards for meeting goals can also go a long way toward employee satisfaction. In fact, studies show that employers who recognize their employees' achievements enjoy a voluntary turnover rate 31% lower than those who do not.<sup>1</sup>





## Relationship With Manager

One of the primary reasons employees leave is their relationship with their supervisor. *It's often said, "People don't leave companies; they leave managers."* In the janitorial industry, this rings especially true. Poor communication and lack of support from their direct manager can drive cleaners away. Strong, supportive leadership fosters trust, satisfaction, and long-term commitment.

## Feeling Undervalued

While cleaning isn't always a glamorous job, it is certainly *essential and should be appreciated*. Employees who feel undervalued by their company or customers quickly lose interest. *Showing appreciation, providing recognition, and asking for feedback* are great ways for a commercial cleaning company to show team members they have their backs.

## Other Job Opportunities

With a growing market for contract cleaning services, *there are simply more opportunities to choose from*. Offering growth and development opportunities — advancement and promoting from within — are effective ways to keep talented employees engaged and onboard.

## Poor culture.

Everyone wants to feel good about their work and the organization they are a part of. When a company's culture is weak, misunderstood, or even toxic, employees can be expected to look for the exits. In fact, a recent MIT report showed toxic workplace culture is over 10 times more likely to contribute to an employee leaving than low pay.<sup>2</sup> *Focusing your energy on building a strong, positive work culture* is a sure way to keep great employees on board.

*According to McKinsey & Company, 54% of respondents said not feeling valued by their organization was one of their top three factors for leaving, 52% said it came down to not feeling valued by their managers, and 51% said a top factor was not feeling like they belonged.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Danielle M. Jones, Esq. (2024, March 27). "The 48 Employee Recognition Statistics to Take Note of in 2024." SelectSoftware Reviews. RSS.

<sup>2</sup>Donald Sull, C. S. (2022, January 11). "Toxic Culture is Driving the Great Resignation." MIT Sloan Management Review.

<sup>3</sup>Smet, A. D., Dowling, B., Mugayar-Baldocchi, M., & Schaninger, B. (2021, September 8). "'Great Attrition' or 'Great Attraction'? The Choice is Yours." McKinsey & Company.

# HOW MUCH DOES TURNOVER **REALLY** **COST YOU?**

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*If you think employee turnover is only a problem for the cleaning company, think again. If your customers see a steady stream of new faces coming in and out of their facility, it could raise a red flag that they are paying more for less. Let's explore some of the hard costs that are often swept under the rug:*

## **Substandard Work**

Receiving excellent service on a regular basis is difficult when new staff are cleaning a facility all the time. **Newly hired employees are often less productive and more likely to miss tasks, damage equipment, or overuse supplies as they train.** Experienced employees are more efficient and more attuned to exactly what their customers want and need.

## **Compromised Safety**

Good commercial cleaning companies follow stringent security processes when hiring to keep their customers, employees, and facilities safe. High turnover could mean less time and resources available to be as thorough as possible when training new cleaners. **Not doing the due diligence required when hiring new employees could compromise the safety of everyone in a facility,** as well as the facility itself.

## **Security Concerns**

When cleaning staff changes too often, it conveys a message of inconsistency and instability to a facility's occupants. **Security comes into question, and that can adversely affect a businesses' reputation,** along with that of the company who is responsible for cleaning it.

## **The Bottom Line**

If it costs a cleaning company \$1,000 to hire a new employee while sustaining a team of 100 workers at a 200% turnover rate, the company must hire 200 new workers each year — **adding \$200,000 to their annual cost! Those costs are likely to be absorbed by the customer.** Meanwhile, money spent on recruitment and onboarding is money that could be used for new equipment, technology, or training that increase employee productivity and the quality of services.

THE SOLUTION:

# SUPERIOR EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Having explored the challenges of employee turnover, the solution becomes clear: **a strategic focus on retention** transforms this issue into an opportunity for long-term success. At 4M, we believe retention starts with investing in passionate people and building lasting partnerships with our customers. We don't just hire employees — we create a team. By fostering a sense of community and purpose, **our Team Members are motivated to deliver exceptional service every day.**

**Here's how 4M reshaped our focus on retention:**



### **Comprehensive Hiring & Screening Process**

The foundation of retention is hiring the right people from the start. **4M directly employs 99.9% of our 6,700+ Team Members**, each thoroughly vetted through I-9 verification, background checks, drug testing, and integrity assessments. This ensures a committed, trustworthy workforce for our customers, who benefit from seeing familiar faces and consistent service quality.



### **Ongoing Training & Development**

Training doesn't stop at onboarding. Our goal is to give our Team Members the tools they need to perform assigned tasks safely, effectively, and consistently. **Every 4M Team Member is continuously trained and evaluated** on safety, quality control, chemical usage, standard operating procedures, equipment handling, and security. We also leverage industry-leading resources, including customized training tools, videos, and expert-led sessions.







### **Recognition & Rewards**

Team Members who feel appreciated take more pride in their work, which encourages them to stay and excel. In addition to offering a competitive wage structure, we provide numerous incentives while recognizing our Team Members for their individual accomplishments and contributions. Programs like **Recruitment Referral Bonuses**, **Team Member of the Month**, and handwritten **“Thank You” notes from our CEO** show that we value their hard work.



### **Growth & Career Development**

In many cleaning jobs, opportunities for advancement are limited. At 4M, we take a different approach with our **Lead 360° supervisor training program**. This intensive, 14-week program requires participants to dedicate 2-3 hours per week (on top of their regular duties) to complete industry-recognized training modules. Team Members also gain expertise in 4M's management programs, HR policies, and safety protocols. As a result, graduates leave the program equipped with leadership skills and a **clear pathway to career advancement with 4M**.



### **Positive Work Environment & Communication**

Open communication is key to fostering a positive workplace. We provide regular opportunities for Team Members to share feedback in one-on-one meetings and team discussions. We also provide opportunities for both **Manager-to-Team Member and Peer-to-Peer acknowledgment**, boosting morale and building camaraderie. Celebrating milestones and anniversaries further strengthens our culture of mutual respect and appreciation, so Team Members feel valued and motivated to stay with the company.

At 4M, retention isn't just about keeping Team Members — it's about nurturing a team that feels empowered, recognized, and equipped to grow with the company. This comprehensive approach to retention has resulted in a turnover rate that is **regularly 66-75% lower than the annual industry average** — demonstrating that when you focus on retaining great people, everyone wins.

**4M'S COMPANY-WIDE  
TURNOVER RATE AVERAGES  
65-75% LOWER** than the  
industry average of 256%.




# CONCLUSION

By now we've learned that the importance of employee retention cannot be understated for cleaning services, as well as the customers and facilities they care for.

## *Here are some key takeaways we've identified in this whitepaper:*

- **The turnover phenomena:** Cleaning staff rollover occurs at much higher rates than other industries for a wide variety of reasons including low wages, location, lack of professional development, and low morale.
- **More turnover, less quality:** Excessive turnover in janitorial employees can result in compromised quality of services due to lengthy onboarding and training processes, less efficient work, and lack of familiarity with customer needs.
- **It all adds up:** Additional costs resulting from constant employee turnover are often indirectly passed on to the customer, who in turn receives less return on investment for lower quality or substandard cleaning services.
- **Refocusing on retention:** A consistent, dedicated focus by cleaning companies on employee retention is absolutely necessary and creates a win-win situation for Team Members and customers alike.
- **Partnership is key:** Selecting a commercial cleaning company that already has established retention practices in place is the best way for facility managers to ensure they receive the highest degree of service at the most competitive rates.



AT 4M, WE'RE  
**BRINGING**  
**NEW MEANING**  
**TO CLEANING™**

4M Building Solutions takes great pride in our Team Members — putting them first in everything we do for over 46 years. That's how we gain, retain, and empower our Team Members to provide you with the most exceptional level of cleaning services from friendly, familiar faces. We believe their dedication, can-do attitude, and professionalism makes 4M the absolute best building services partner in the industry and we're ready to prove it to you.



Find out what 4M can do for your facility.  
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