

equipment required more training than traditional vacuums.

The workers needed to practice new ways with new equipment, and they needed encouragement.

“We kept emphasizing the benefits in terms of health, safety and labor saving methods,” Bartlemay says. For example, Bartlemay explains how a thousand cleaning chemicals used throughout the division were reduced to just three main portion packed ones. Six other control products were also introduced. The economies of just-in-time purchasing and storing in condensed form saved Boeing considerable amounts of money, while product simplification took the guesswork out of cleaning and aided workers in choosing and using compatible solutions. Standardization throughout the division created additional efficiencies and economies. Disinfection practices were also improved through enhanced training, focus and dilution control.

“Magic Glue”?

When the going got the roughest the (OS1) team kept a strong and united front. The team now consisted of only three members, Marsha Surprenant, Michael Martin and Lorraine Bartlemay. “We were all on the same page about where we needed to go, and we all understood what we needed to do to get there,” Surprenant asserts. “There were no personal agendas. It was a ‘helping’ climate. We wanted everyone to win.”

Dedication helps, too. “Sometimes we had to put our home lives on hold,” Bartlemay explains. “We needed to be on the job long hours, and we were.” She adds wisely, “You must believe in what you are doing or you can’t help others.”

What made it all worth it? “It’s the personal satisfaction that comes from within—from knowing that you’re doing the right thing, improving the company and adding value. I love what I’m doing,” she states.

Cleaning Process Speaks For Itself.

Down in the trenches, acceptance of the new cleaning system was rarely automatic. Workers needed to see the benefits for themselves. What they saw, among other facets, was what Bartlemay calls “level-loaded work”—balancing the janitorial jobs so no one has an easier or harder run. Rotating the jobs every 90 days or less added to the fairness factor. Job cards built on international standards guide workers step by step in performing top-quality work equitably and reasonably.

During training, Bartlemay says, “my job wasn’t to convince, but rather to give workers and supervisors the information that enabled them to be knowledgeable about the work they do. Dignity and respect are built into the training, empowering each person,” she says.

“It’s the hardest thing I’ve ever done,”

says Surprenant of the first 18 months. Would she do it again? She is doing it again. Surprenant and two colleagues are now rolling out the system in Boeing’s Southern California region—another vast and quirky mish-mash of various cleaning operations to be fused into one comprehensive system to ensure a safer and healthier worker environment that is more economic to maintain using better trained workers, fewer chemicals and more technologically advanced equipment.

“This cleaning process,” Bartlemay concludes, “will work in virtually any business.” The net value, she believed, comes from enterprise-wide consistency. Systematic cleaning at Boeing has succeeded in reducing the necessary frequency of cleaning while at the same time improving air quality, sanitation, safety for workers and building occupants while ensuring a cleaner facility and reducing cost. Surprenant, Bartlemay and Martin know this personally and professionally from the inside out.

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For more information on the Boeing process, contact Allen P. Rathey, President, InstructionLink / JanTrain, Inc., arthey@jantrain.com.

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Managing Housekeeping Change

Boeing Operating System Takes Flight



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By Allen Rathey

Change rarely comes easily or automatically in large organizations, even when those changes would save money, increase efficiency and make people's jobs easier, safer and more satisfying.

Why is change so difficult? For one thing, we are creatures of habit who prefer our accustomed comfort zones. Change tends to make us insecure. We're not sure what's what, we feel out of control, and sometimes we fear we won't measure up.

At The Boeing Company's Puget Sound division in Seattle, we find a living lesson in how to lead change at the ground level. Boeing needed to change its entire cleaning/janitorial process, which was fragmented and inconsistent—and therefore costly and uneven in results. This would be no small endeavor since the division covers 17 million square feet, including 388 buildings, 1700 restrooms and the largest building in the world (according to the Guinness Book of World Records).

With senior management's blessing, a change management team was appointed to work with cleaning consultant John

Walker in implementing a far-reaching cleaning system called (OS1), which stands for "Operating System 1"—a management approach based on the principles of Team Cleaning. "The theory behind the system is simple," says Marsha Surprenant, who spearheaded much of Boeing's effort under her title, (OS1) Process Owner: "It's clean for health first and then for appearance." This contrasts with much of the cleaning industry's practice, which emphasizes cleaning for appearance. "Much of the industry believes if you can't see it, it doesn't matter," quips Surprenant. "We believe it does matter."

The process redefines cleaning tasks and teams to prevent redundancy and maintain consistency in approaches, equipment, chemicals, training and cleaning sequences. As Surprenant sees it, the system provides a framework so that a company can run its cleaning process like a business—professionally organized and accountable for its performance.

The approach is supported by logic, empirical data and results. Surprenant and her Boeing colleague, Lorraine Bartlemay,

Manager of (OS1) Training and Communications, saw it clearly when they attended Janitor University (J.U.), a one-week program of leadership education, demonstration, workshops and hands-on training established by Walker.

All seven of Boeing's original (OS1) transition team members attended J.U. They were convinced beyond a doubt that it was the route for Boeing to go. "It was the right thing for the company," affirms Surprenant, "and for our employees. The system revolves around health, safety, savings and cleanliness."

To ensure process compliance and a good understanding of the proper use of chemicals and equipment, every janitor is required to complete basic training.

Got Grit?

The (OS1) team had just begun to initiate massive changes at Boeing when the New York World Trade Center disaster happened on 9/11/01. That changed everything—except the program. "A change as major as (OS1) in a company the size of Boeing would normally take four years,"

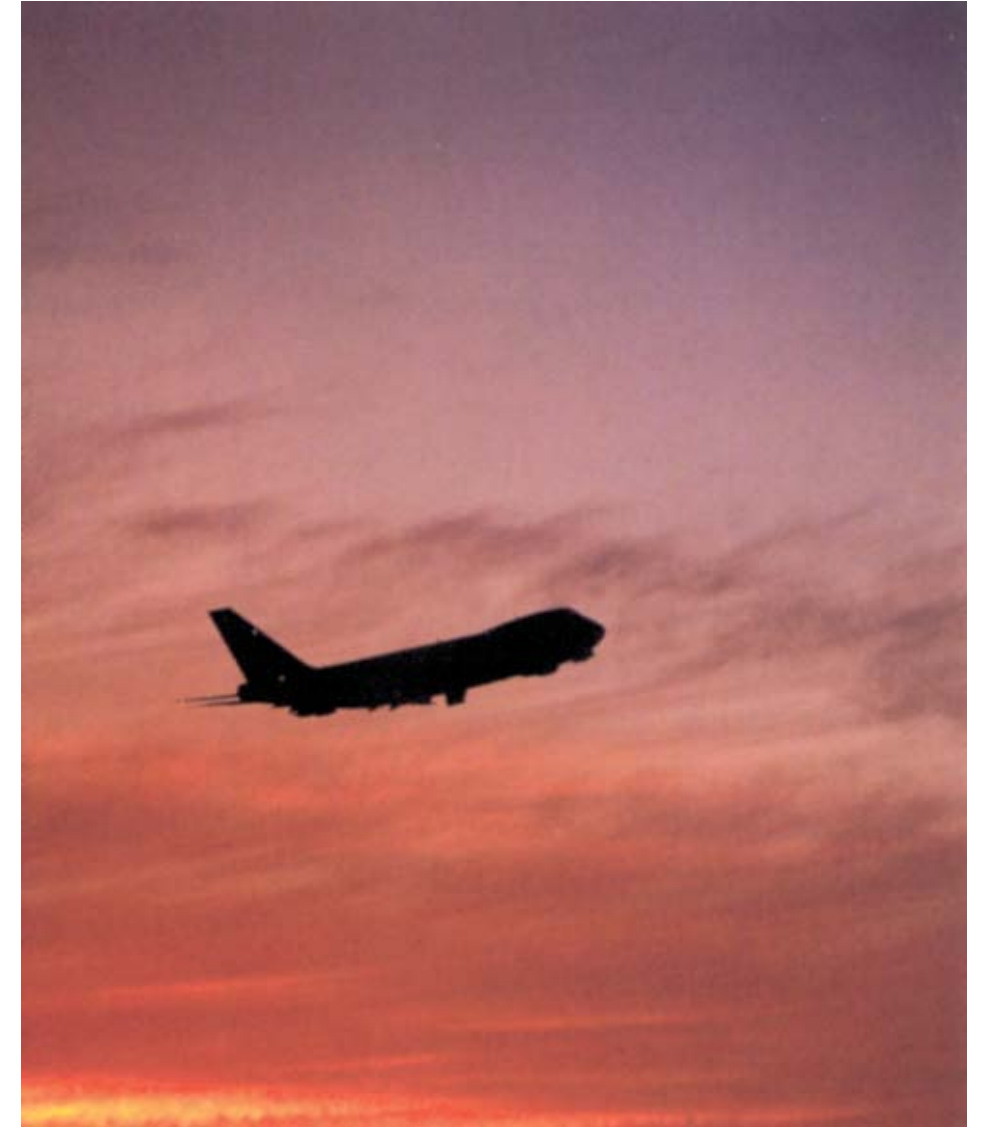
Surprenant notes. But in the severe economic slump faced by the airline industry after 9/11, the team was given just 18 months to accomplish the task—at the same time that custodial staff was reduced by a staggering 40 percent.

The team dug in to meet the challenge. "We couldn't retool the program, so we retooled ourselves," Surprenant says. Were there times when they wanted to quit? Of course. But they didn't. Why not?

"All the data told us that the new system was the best thing for the company and our employees," reiterates Surprenant. Further, she says, "You must take the 'you' out of it. The program was about wanting a safe environment, and that's larger than yourself. You push past the low moments," she confides. She adds one more thing: "If not us, then who?" So they kept leading the change process through thick and thin.

Walk Softly . . . But Run A Tight Schedule.

Since resistance to change is part of human nature, Surprenant advises: "Treat people with respect and be helpful during the stressful times. Answer their questions and make yourself as available as you reasonably can"—while not compromising progress toward the goal. "People don't feel as alone if you make time to talk with them," she assure. If employees are resisting or having a tough time making adjustments to new procedures, it pays to be sensitive.



Sensitivity starts with realizing what you are asking of the janitors. "We were changing every aspect of their jobs," Surprenant points out—not just tinkering around the edges. "They'd done this job another way their entire careers. They were being uprooted. In a way," she says, "it's like wearing your shoes on the wrong feet—not very comfortable! They had nowhere to hide; we were taking away all that was familiar in their former roles."

Bartlemay agrees: "It's normal for

people to feel apprehensive about change. One obstacle is fear of the unknown; another issue is job security."

Education and communication were constant keynotes in implementing (OS1). "We helped our employees understand how to use the equipment properly," Surprenant says. This includes the use of backpack vacuums which are integral to the program. Backpacks helped to improve cleaning, indoor air quality, productivity and safety at Boeing, though the