

A Day In The Life Of Plant Management

Learn 10 ways to improve plant management operations — plus, find out how a facilities services vendor can improve the food processing experience.

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Paul manages a food processing facility that produces bread, pastries, and other baked goods. He's been with his employer for three years, and he hopes to stay until he retires. One of Paul's favorite things about his job in plant management is the camaraderie. Even though some functions are outsourced, everyone who works in the bakery is treated like a member of the team.



Credit: Jupiterimages

In fact, his facility services vendor is holding its daily safety meeting just as his day is starting. Today, they're talking about safe sanitation practices. He's always part of these training sessions and offers input where necessary.

As Paul settles into his office, he prepares all the documentation he needs for an AIB inspection scheduled for the afternoon. He feels confident, since his sanitation manager performs regular inspections, and all of her documents can be accessed online. He knows that he'll be able to easily access any record the inspector requires.

On the plant floor, Paul uses his smartphone to enter a new work order. His facility services vendor will automatically receive an alert about the new request, and Paul will be able to check on the status at any time. Having access to those records while on the go allows Paul to spend more time on the floor, instead of in his office dealing with paperwork.

When he sees that demand is increasing for some of the company's products, he calls his facility services vendor for help adding staff. It's a relief to have access to qualified workers without having to manage the labor himself.

Another reason Paul enjoys his job is because he works for a company that cares about sustainability. Whether it's the sanitation program, or energy usage, he knows that his facility is producing quality products with minimal impact on the environment and employee health.

Are you thinking, "This isn't possible"? Think again. A facility services partner with food and beverage manufacturing experience can keep your facility inspection-ready, support your sustainability goals, and fill critical gaps in your labor pool. Plus, they can implement technology that improves transparency and accountability. With the time saved, managers like Paul can focus on plant production, keeping employees engaged, and related efficiencies.

10 Ways To Enhance The Food Manufacturing Environment



Credit: Kim Steele

1. Make safety a part of everyone's job. Too often, safety is neglected until an accident happens. But when safety is a part of your culture, and not just a bullet on the list of training topics, everyone benefits — both your employees and your customers.

2. Put sustainability front and center. From waste disposal to indoor air quality, the pressure is on to minimize your environmental impact. It takes specialized equipment and processes to meet that goal. A well-rounded facility services provider can advise you on ways to make your facility more efficient and sustainable.

3. Let someone else worry about managing staffing levels. Whether you need help with shipping and receiving or keeping up with demand, you don't have to manage the staffing alone. Outsourcing helps you keep up with changes in demand without the administrative burden.

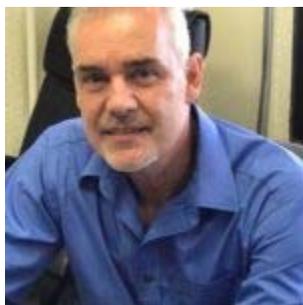
- 4. Be inspection-ready and Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)-compliant with a solid sanitation program.** When it's time for the American Institute of Baking (AIB), Food & Drug Administration (FDA), or British Retail Consortium (BRC) to inspect your facility, there shouldn't be any surprises. The sanitization process is only half of a good sanitation program – solid, consistent record-keeping ensures your facility is inspection-ready.
- 5. Reduce downtime with preventive equipment maintenance.** Equipment that's consistently maintained is safer for employees and prevents downtime. With a reliable turnkey maintenance program, you can focus on producing high-quality products, and not worry about how your equipment is running.
- 6. Keep your whole facility welcoming and comfortable with housekeeping.** Break rooms, restrooms, and offices don't need sanitizing, but that doesn't mean they aren't just as important as the production floor. Apply sustainable practices to your housekeeping program to make your whole facility comfortable for employees and guests, and safe for the environment.
- 7. Move away from paper record keeping.** Let paper record keeping become a thing of the past. Digital records make it easy to check when the last inspection, training session, or work order was completed. These records can be accessed at the plant level or in the corporate office, making it easy to prepare for inspections and identify areas for improvement.
- 8. Automate work orders and regularly scheduled tasks.** There's no risk of confusion when the master sanitation schedule is digitized. Automating alerts for regularly scheduled tasks reduces the chances of work slipping through the cracks. The same goes for work orders. With smart phones and tablets as the point of access, work orders and tasks are always at your staff's fingertips.
- 9. Improve accountability with onsite management.** There's a common misconception that outsourcing can lead to poor service due to a lack of onsite oversight. However, having an onsite manager keeps staff accountable. It's much easier to be proactive and address service concerns when your vendor's management staff is familiar with your facility and can talk to your staff face-to-face.
- 10. Implement best practices across sites.** If you have multiple locations to manage, it can be difficult to ensure that they're all operating on the same page. And since each location is unique, your facility services have to be flexible enough to adapt to each facility. Establishing best practices at the corporate and facility level ensures that all of your locations are running according to industry and company standards.

Finding A Trusted Partner

A facilities services vendor with food processing experience can take on sanitation, general labor, engineering, energy, and housekeeping services. Look for vendors who can scale staffing to your needs. They should have access to local labor pools who are ready to go to work when you need them. They should also have management staff that can work onsite in your facilities. Those managers should have all of the necessary certifications required for servicing your facility, and the vendor should demonstrate how they plan to keep training up to date.

Technological capability is another key factor. Whether you are looking to upgrade your record-keeping system, or you have a state-of-the-art system in place, a good vendor should be able to advise you on your options or get quickly up to speed with your current capabilities. While technology improves transparency and simplifies processes, it's only as good as the people who use it. Training and access are just as important as having the right systems. Well-trained workers who know how to use technology and have the right devices to access it are crucial to successfully integrating innovation into your processes.

Every plant is unique, even when they're owned by the same company. A solid facility services vendor should have the industry expertise to keep your facility running smoothly, as well as a commitment to adapting to your particular needs. Relying on their expertise, you can focus on your core duties while they keep your facility running smoothly. Your employees will appreciate working in a well-managed facility. And your customers will appreciate the consistency of your products.



Santopietro is vice president of operations for the Food & Beverage segment at [ABM](#). He has worked for ABM for 16 years. Prior to ABM, Santopietro served in management positions at Classic Bakery, Keebler, Toufayn Bakery, and Golden Loaf Bakery.