

SERVICE SUPPLIER PROFILE

SERVICEMASTER CLEANS AND RESTORES (AND MORE)

Founded by a minor-league ballplayer who went into the mothproofing business, ServiceMaster generates annual revenues of more than \$3.2 billion (U.S.) in North America and 14 countries around the world

BY PAMELA YOUNG

Every large international company has to start somewhere, and ServiceMaster originated when an Arkansas-born former minor league baseball player named Marion E. Wade decided to establish a mothproofing business in Chicago. That enterprise soon expanded into rug and carpet cleaning – and then it grew and grew and grew. Based in Memphis, TN, the ServiceMaster network is now active in Canada, the United States and 14 other countries and generates annual revenues of more than \$3.2 billion (U.S.)

ServiceMaster of Canada, a wholly owned subsidiary of ServiceMaster since 1993, comprises seven different offerings serving a mix of business-to-business and residential

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markets: the three divisions of ServiceMaster Clean, which provide janitorial services, commercial specialty cleaning, and residential carpet and upholstery cleaning respectively; ServiceMaster Restore, the disaster restoration offering for businesses and homes; Furniture Medic, which specializes in fine furniture restoration and repair; Merry Maids, a residential maid service; and AmeriSpec, a home inspection service. Recently *CFM&D* discussed the company's offerings that are of particular interest to facility management professionals with two senior ServiceMaster of Canada executives: Ian England, currently Vice President of Operations, will succeed Bob Brennan as ServiceMaster of Canada President on January 1, 2013; his colleague Gavin Bajin is Business Leader of the Commercial Services division.

Each year thousands of Canadian businesses coast to coast rely on ServiceMaster Restore to get operations safely up and running after fire and flood damage and many other

types of emergencies, but that side of the business is most often contracted through insurance companies. Facility managers are more likely to contract directly with ServiceMaster Clean, and for that reason much of what follows has to do with the differences between janitorial services and commercial specialty cleaning, and what ServiceMaster Clean offers in each of these categories.

“Generally, ‘janitorial’ is light-duty everyday cleaning and ‘commercial specialty’ is really trade work,” Mr. England said. Commercial specialty encompasses areas such as carpet cleaning (as opposed to janitorial carpet vacuuming) and furniture cleaning – activities that aren't performed on a daily basis and require a different sort of expertise. “If we had one thing to say to facility managers, it would be to treat janitorial and carpet care as separate decisions,” Mr. England said. “In most companies, the janitorial crews do the carpet cleaning. We don't do it that way because we believe carpet care really is a specialty.”

A former ServiceMaster Clean franchise owner himself who has been with the company for 35 years, Mr. England has seen significant changes in janitorial service contracts over his years in the business. “Facility managers are under a ton of cost containment pressure today, and janitorial expense is a large piece of what they manage,” he said. “When I started in this business the pacing rates for vacuuming were about 1,000 to 1,500 square feet per hour. Now there isn't a janitorial spec that goes out there that isn't for 6,000 to 10,000 square feet an hour.” At the same time, awareness of poten-



▶ The 'Capture and Removal' cleaning process performed by ServiceMaster Clean janitorial crews involves backpack-style high-filtration vacuums, dust wands and microfibre technologies.



▶ Above left: Carpet cleaning is a ServiceMaster Clean specialty. Above right: ServiceMaster Clean and ServiceMaster Restore vehicles are on the job coast to coast. Right: ServiceMaster of Canada Vice President of Operations Ian England will move into the role of President at the start of 2013. Far right: Gavin Bajin is Business Leader of ServiceMaster Clean's Commercial Services Division.



tial hazards that certain cleaning chemicals and cleaning methods can pose to humans and the environment has greatly increased. One of ServiceMaster Clean's primary strategies for increasing both the safety and efficiency of its operations has been the development of its proprietary 'Capture and Removal' team cleaning process. “The concept is simple: let's capture and remove dirt from the system, rather than just move it around,” Mr. England said. ServiceMaster Clean's janitorial staff use dust wand and microfibre technologies, along with backpack-style high-filtration vacuums that capture 99.9 per cent of particles smaller than one micron in size. The company has developed its own proprietary suite of cleaning products, known as GreenFor™, and recognizes that green cleaning has to do not only with environmentally benign chemicals but with minimizing electrical and water usage. As well, ServiceMaster provides the option of daylight cleaning; having cleaning crews make their rounds during the business day rather than after-hours saves energy that has traditionally been expended to light and heat otherwise-empty office buildings at night.

The janitorial market, Mr. England said, is so large that the secret to success is not to attempt to be everything for everybody. While ServiceMaster Clean enjoys a healthy business in all major markets across the country, they have found their own niche in janitorial for buildings in the 5,000 to 100,000-sq.-ft. size range. (With 381 franchise licenses in total under the ServiceMaster of Canada umbrella, the company has a presence in more than 80 communities across the country, ranging from Victoria, BC, to St. John's NL. It has a 'one person to one market' franchise model, with no direct selling from head office; instead, each franchise has its own sales team.)

On the commercial specialty side of ServiceMaster Clean, the company has a strong presence in the major urban cen-

tres. In larger office buildings within larger cities, Mr. Bajin said, the property manager usually contracts out the general janitorial services, but the facility managers of tenanted space within these buildings have cleaning needs that fall outside the parameters of the janitorial contract. “Facility managers have to deal with the cleaning of carpet and many other things within their tenanted space – upholstery, air registers, workstations, computer terminals and computer rooms, for example, and that's where our commercial group can really make a big difference,” Mr. Bajin said.

He also drew attention to the synergy between ServiceMaster Clean and ServiceMaster Restore. “If facility managers are in a position to procure janitorial, carpet cleaning and specialty services, they're going to need disaster services at some time,” he said. “We believe that having all three of those offerings is a significant differentiator for us.” ServiceMaster's CommercialLINK program allows companies to pre-qualify ServiceMaster Restore as their vendor of choice, which means that restoration work can begin immediately after damage occurs.

Marion Wade believed strongly in serving God, treating people ethically, and getting the job done right. The company he founded still holds true to those tenets, and that in part explains why many of its franchisees and employees have been part of the organization for decades – and how it has continued to grow, despite market pressures. “For us, it's not all about volume,” Mr. England said. “If there's no room for quality, we're the wrong guys.” But at the same time, he added, “we come from a very aggressive culture for growth, and we intend to be in more places, doing more things.” For example, ServiceMaster provides cleaning services for health-care facilities, and has found that new stand-alone 'day patient' clinics – increasingly common in Western Canada in particular – are a growth market for its offerings. In the near future, Mr. England said, ServiceMaster of Canada also intends to strengthen its presence in Quebec. Wherever the future takes the company, it will take a plainly worded but challenging mission statement with it: “We simplify and improve the quality of our customers' lives.” | CFM&D

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