

The (Matting) Butler at the Door

By

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California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) officials are justifiably happy with their efforts to make their building in Sacramento Greener and more sustainable. Although it cost about US\$500,000 to upgrade the facility, the Cal/EPA now claims to save as much as \$600,000 annually, a 120 percent return on the investment in just the first year.

A number of steps were taken to reduce energy, lighting, cooling, and heating needs in the facility. Water-reducing and no-water fixtures were installed in all the restrooms,

and landscaping was changed so that only native vegetation surrounded the building. This resulted in a nearly 50 percent reduction in water use and a noteworthy cost savings.

Listed toward the bottom of the green and sustainable savings updates for the facility was the estimate that cleaning costs have been reduced by as much as \$10,000 annually because high-performance matting systems have been installed at all major entries.

Although the facility managers were aware of the key role matting plays in helping to green a facility, they did not expect this to also produce such a large cost savings. It is possible an even bigger surprise is in store for them.

These savings can be proven by experts in the professional cleaning industry and in studies by ISSA, the Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association.* If as much as 80 percent of all the soil, dust, contaminants, and moisture entering a facility are tracked in on the shoes of building staff and visitors, any system that can reduce this percentage helps keep the building clean, thus reducing cleaning costs.

"This is why some people like to refer to matting as 'the silent janitor,' but I like to refer to it as having the butler at the door," says Christopher Tricozzi, vice president of sales and marketing for Crown Mats and Matting, one of the oldest and largest matting companies in the United States. "As you walk in, the butler grabs your hat, your coat, and, in this case, your shoes as well, keeping any soil they contain from being walked in the facility."

Less soil walked into the facility means hard surface floors and carpets stay cleaner, so less mopping, sweeping, and vacuuming are necessary. This also helps prevent dust and debris from being ground into floors, requiring floor scrubbing and refinishing to repair the damage and restore the floors. It also minimizes the need for both interim and complete carpet restoration. On top of this, it helps reduce the need for building surfaces to be dusted as frequently.

Significant savings

According to Tricozzi, matting can produce these costs savings:

- It is estimated that each person walking into a facility carries with them—usually on their shoes—about 0.02 ounces of dust and soil.
- If 500 people work in this facility five days per week, more than 10 ounces of soil is walked in daily.
- In one year's time, that adds up to more than 160 pounds of dust, dirt, soil, and contaminants.
- It is estimated that it costs at least \$500 to remove one pound of soil tracked into a building.
- This means, it costs more than \$80,000 per year to remove this soil and keep the facility clean; or, by preventing the soil from entering the building, cleaning costs can be reduced by more than \$80,000.

"A quick glance at the [Cal/EPA] building's staff directory indicates that there are at least, and possibly more than, 500 people working in the building," says Tricozzi. "This means they are likely saving several times more than they estimated as a result of the matting systems in place ... a significant savings by anyone's standards."