

## ***The Importance of Maintaining High Housekeeping Standards: by Hugh Large***

***The standards of housekeeping and cleanliness that are evident in your store are becoming increasingly important factors in attracting and keeping your customers, because they recognize that you are in the food business, selling them snacks, treats and other food products that they are going to consume themselves or with their friends or family.***

*Ask yourself if they would patronize a restaurant that had dirty floors, tables, or dishes. If not, why should they continue to shop at any food store that had poor standards of housekeeping and cleanliness, particularly when there are an increasing number of good shopping alternatives?*

Maintaining high standards of cleanliness and housekeeping in a convenience store is not an easy task. It is something that has to be worked on continually by all members of the store staff, but when done right it is something that can set you apart from many of your competitors.

### ***The Outside:***

Cleanliness and housekeeping starts on the outside of the store with a clean and well maintained lot that is attractive and free from litter. An attractive outside includes a front door that is clean, garbage cans that are in good condition and not overflowing, sidewalks that are clean and steam cleaned on occasion, windows that are clean and free from damaged, faded and out-dated signs and posters, and a building exterior that looks like you care.

*Remember that outside of your store is your first opportunity to create a good impression, so you need to take the time to look at it through your customer's eyes and ask yourself; "If I were a customer does this look like a store where I would want to shop?"*

### ***The Inside:***

- ✓ Are the floors clean and frequently mopped, are there mats in place for customers to clean their feet, are the aisles free from litter and displays, and are all the lights in good working order?
- ✓ Is the cash desk clean, organized and uncluttered and do the customers have lots of room to pay for their purchases?
- ✓ Are the products in good condition, clean and free from dust and dirt? Have damaged and outdated products and boxes been removed from the shelves and are the shelves clean, full and front-faced?
- ✓ If you have coffee / food counters, do the counters look like they have been recently wiped clean or are they sticky and messy? Is the equipment clean and shiny or does it look grungy and dirty? If there is fresh food, does it look attractive and appetizing?
- ✓ Around the store are there old, out-dated and damaged signs and displays, is there equipment that is not working properly, and are the washrooms clean, bright, and stocked with the necessary supplies?
- ✓ Are the staff neat and clean with good personal hygiene, and do they look and act as professionals?

*In short, if you put on your "customers hat" is this a store where you can buy food and feel confident in its quality and freshness and where it appears that the operator cares about the quality of the products they are selling?*

***Maintaining high standards of cleanliness and housekeeping is an on-going and never ending job, and will only happen if you have a detailed schedule of the tasks that need to be done hourly, each shift, each day, each week, and each month, and that they are assigned to specific staff to complete. In addition, every staff member has to understand the importance of maintaining these high standards each and every day.***

***Your customers will notice and appreciate it!***