

Here's why clean hands should be at the heart of your business

Looking to boost productivity, employee satisfaction and sales? Then you should start by understanding the power of clean hands.

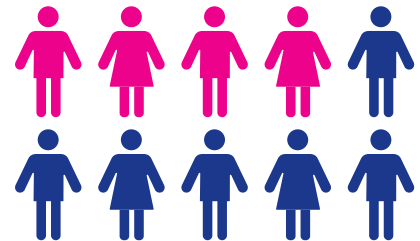
The link between hand hygiene and public health is undisputed, but what role do clean hands play in business? As a hygiene and health company dedicated to improving well-being, Essity set out to answer this question by surveying thousands of consumers and professionals from different countries and industries.

Our main finding? The simple act of washing hands can boost productivity, increase employee satisfaction, and even help businesses attract and retain customers. Here are five reasons for why clean hands should be at the heart of your business:

1. Employees want you to prioritize hand hygiene

We live in times of widespread hygiene worries, particularly among working people. More than 4 in 10 full-time employees said they always or often worry about becoming ill due to poor hygiene, and just as many wanted hand hygiene to be given higher priority at work. While it comes as little surprise that half of all restaurant workers wished for improved hand hygiene, they were not alone. Industry workers and people working in sales were also just as keen on putting hand hygiene higher on the corporate agenda.

4 in 10 full-time employees wanted hand hygiene to be given higher priority at work



17 million
workdays lost each
year in the U.S. due
to the flu

2. Investing in hand hygiene means investing in productivity

If you want to keep your employees productive, you should start by providing them the means and knowledge to maintain safe hand hygiene at work. Regular handwashing with soap is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs and avoid getting sick, thus enabling employees to stay healthy and attend work. In the U.S. alone, approximately 17 million workdays are lost per year due to the flu – many of which could be prevented by the help of handwashing with soap¹.

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/flu/activities.html>

3. Implementing hand washing routines can boost employee satisfaction

Knowing that everyone at work washes their hands properly would have a positive impact on the well-being of almost 8 in 10 full-time employees. 4 in 10 would feel more comfortable and secure, and 3 in 10 would feel more satisfied. Promoting hand washing at work could even make employees happier (23%) and less stressed (14%), according to the survey.

4. Proper hand hygiene can bring more customers and boost loyalty

Half of respondents said they usually notice when people don't maintain proper hand hygiene, and poor hygiene can be a critical deal breaker in a buying situation. 1 in 10 have refrained from staying at a specific hotel or visiting the doctor due to hygiene concerns, and more than half of respondents said they have avoided a food establishment because of the overall hygiene and the hygiene of the employees. While poor hand hygiene can make a company lose a potential customer, proper hand hygiene can in fact boost customer loyalty. Noticing that the staff at a restaurant have clear routines for hand washing would make almost half of the respondents more willing to eat there again.

5. Clean hands makes people more likely to trust you

Maintaining proper hand hygiene can also influence how you are perceived by others. A vast majority of respondents – more than 8 in 10 – considered people who regularly wash their hands to be more highly regarded. Proper hand hygiene was associated with being more professional (26%), more trustworthy (26%), more considerate of others (42%), and more conscientious (50%) – all of which are typically mentioned as keys to success in networking and sales.

To sum up, improved levels of hand hygiene can work wonders both for productivity, employee satisfaction and sales. So what can you do to unlock the benefits of clean hands? First of all, give hand hygiene higher priority at work. Secondly, ensure that all employees have access to soap and water. Finally, promote regular hand washing among your employees – and don't forget to let your customers know about it.

When to wash your hands

- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- Before and after preparing food and eating
- After using the toilet or coming in contact with it.
- After touching a pet and handling its food
- Before and after caring for a sick person and treating a wound
- After touching garbage

How to wash your hands

1. Wash your hands with lukewarm water and soap
2. Scrub all sides, fingertips, fingernails and between your fingers – don't forget your thumbs
3. Continue for about 20-30 seconds
4. Rinse well
5. Dry well with a paper towel

People who regularly wash their hands are considered to be more:

Conscientious (50%)

Considerate of others (42%)

Trustworthy (26%)

Professional (26%)

