

# eLearning: how technology has benefited the way cleaners learn



**By Murray McDonald\***

Over the last five years, self-paced, online learning is becoming more common in almost every industry. Even universities, which are seen as one of the highest levels of education providers, now offer various online and self-paced certifications.

Today, almost everyone has access to the internet during any given moment, either via their computers, phones or portable tablets. As seen through the online shopping phenomenon, businesses in all industries have fast realised that online is where their customers are.

However, it's important that we don't just see the internet as a valuable channel for sales, but also for education. It is important that cleaners understand the value of cleaning education, industry trends and in depth cleaning processes. Not just basic product knowledge.

One of the biggest online learning avenues is through 'e-learning courses'. E-learning courses can be completed on subjects such as green cleaning, carpet cleaning or on particular industry cleaning issues. E-learning courses provide cleaners with reading materials, videos and self-paced questionnaires that essentially allow cleaners to test themselves on the knowledge they have acquired. The aim of an e-learning course is to provide cleaners with both practical and theoretical knowledge.

Here are three key ways how online learning, particularly e-learning programs, have helped contract cleaners stay ahead in their industry.

## Deeper understanding of industry issues

Product knowledge will only get a cleaner so far. Businesses and facilities, particularly in the accommodation and healthcare sectors, want a cleaner with industry understanding. Businesses are well aware of the cleaning issues that are impacting their profit margins and reputation, and want a cleaner that can give and show them the answers.

For example, in the healthcare industry, infection control cleaning is a hot topic at the moment, including superbug outbreaks and new national benchmarks. For a contract cleaner to be able to understand these issues and solutions involved, this will not only give them leverage to secure further contracts but also implement their cleaning procedures to the highest standard. This will ultimately reflect on the cleaner's skills and expertise.

## Cost effective up-skilling

Many cleaners would like the opportunity to up-skill but many see it as an expensive task. As every industry across the board keeps up with new technology, processes and policies, this is having a domino effect on the cleaning industry through its different sectors.

Up-skilling involves taking the cleaning skills people already have and ensuring they are still doing it the best way possible and discovering if there are any cleaning issues with which they are not yet familiar.

E-learning programs provide videos and self-paced courses that allow cleaners to learn about these new issues and processes, depending on what area of cleaning in which they are wanting to up-skill. At the end of the course, the student can test themselves by answering a series of questions that will allow them to essentially 'learn' what they discovered.

## Become an expert

Anyone who is seen as an 'expert' in their field of work is considered credible and reliable. E-learning courses provide cleaners with a 'one-stop-shop' to find out what they need to become a cleaning expert.

Cleaners aren't expected to know everything about a particular industry. E-learning courses break down the information for cleaners and only provide them with the relevant and essential cleaning knowledge. This stops 'learners' from being overwhelmed by too much or irrelevant information, unlike using a search engine and doing research yourself via the internet.

Expert knowledge can help cleaners in scenarios such as initial interviews and even in casual conversations with potential employers. The ability to drop in expert knowledge where possible is one of the best ways to demonstrate expertise and receive increased referrals.

Education doesn't just involve reading up on an issue or becoming so familiar with a process it becomes second nature. Although these factors are important to self education true education involves understanding the core of why we do what we do. E-learning courses provide this crucial aspect to learning through demonstrating the practical as well as the theoretical side of cleaning.



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