

The Power of Paint

Brian Foster

A simple, affordable solution to several restaurant challenges

The landscape of facilities maintenance is ever changing. As cutbacks continue to hit companies across the country, facility departments are being asked to do more with less. Meanwhile, companies are also looking for ways to increase sales.

Tom Bradburn, a noted author and restaurateur for more than 48 years, posted an article on Yahoo on ways to increase sales in restaurants. He mentioned three key factors: appearance of the restaurant, quality of the food and attitude of the staff. Notice that appearance was the first item.

So how do facility managers help make an impact on the restaurant's appearance, while keeping costs down? By painting. Many dollars are spent on curb appeal and interior atmosphere. You can maximize those dollars with the proper paint job. Painting adds value, while also preserving the surfaces of a restaurant.

The painting industry is developing new products every day. Specialized formulations of paints are available that can resist fading, are chip resistant, and even include antimicrobial properties to resist mold and fungi growth. There are products that can help save energy, self clean and even turn a wall into a chalk board.

Picking Your Paint

Before we get into the different paint features available, let's cover some painting basics. Paints come in many sheens and colors. Selections of colors are normally a personal or corporate decision. However, picking the correct sheen can be more challenging. Flat, eggshell, satin and semi-gloss are the most popular choices.

Flats offer a flat finish that can hide imperfections in a wall and present a warm appearance. However, they are a little harder to clean than their counterparts. Eggshell has a slightly shinier appearance than flat, just like an egg, but it's not as shiny as satin, which is the most popular choice for walls. Semi-gloss is the easiest to clean and is usually used in high-traffic areas, but on walls it can show imperfections.

Now that you have selected a color and sheen, do you use latex or oil paint (also called enamel)? Much of that decision is based on what you are painting. Latex paints are water-based, so they are easier to clean up and dry faster. Seventy-five percent of all paint sold today is latex.

Oil-based or alkyds are an oil/solvent-based paint, which take longer to dry and are not as easy to clean up. On the other hand, they do provide a harder finish. For a comparison of the pros and cons of each type of paint, see the performance chart below.

You and your painter can determine what products and process will work best for your project. Most painting companies have relationships with the major paint manufacturers, which can provide you with the best options that fit your project and budget.

Benefits of Painting

Painting is the most economical way of changing appearance and can help save money in a number of ways.

Today's energy costs are soaring. In warmer climates, applying reflective coatings on the roof of your restaurants can reduce the heat in your facilities by taking the load off of your air conditioning units.

Think about a hot summer day on the beach. When you step onto that white sand, it is hot, but if you dig your foot just below the surface, the sand below is cool. That same process happens when applying a reflective coating to your roof. These coatings are more than 80 percent solar reflective, which makes them perfect for flat roofs that are not seen by customers and outside your brand specs.

Remember the commercial for Rain-X? The idea was that you put it on your windshield to make the water bead so you can see easier. Technology has continued to advance and can now be found in paints for the exterior of your buildings. Apply these coatings, and the rain essentially washes your building. As the water beads and runs down the side of your building, it picks up the surface dirt and carries it to the ground. This can extend the life and look of your paint job simply by using nature's resources.

As with any other product, there are high-priced and low-priced paint options. Finding what's best for your facility and project will likely be a team decision between you, your painting vendor and the paint company representative all working together. This can help you stay within budget and achieve the best results.

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