

Buying In 'Bulk'

Eric Crabb

Gain immediate ROI from a bundled handyman program

Maintenance costs are a significant portion of facility management, according to the National Restaurant Association. Although some facility managers opt to manage maintenance internally, this can be expensive and dangerous. According to FSR Magazine, facility managers who implement managed maintenance programs, such as bundled handyman programs, spend about 50 percent less on maintenance per year.

Bundling Basics

A bundled handyman program refers to an outsourced, recurring maintenance or repair schedule for day-to-day problems, such as chipped paint, tile damage, carpentry work, doors and hinges, drawer glides, and many other things that can and often do go wrong in a facility. The goal is to present your restaurant as a clean, quality facility and an enjoyable experience for your customers, while gaining better control over maintenance spend.

The immediate return on investment (ROI) from implementing a bundled handyman program results in eight benefits:

Regular attention to the maintenance backlog.

Deferred maintenance is a major risk for businesses and can lead to costs that are 30 times higher than the original repair, reports Naomi Millan of Facilities Net. A bundled handyman program gives facility managers an opportunity to conveniently address all lagging maintenance issues by putting someone else in charge of the process, saving money and avoiding the headache of managing repairs in-house.

A checklist for non-emergency work.

An effective bundled handyman program should include a checklist designed for the unique needs of a specific facility. Obviously, emergency work will not fall under this checklist, but the checklist does provide a means of reviewing all existing systems for work or general maintenance that does not constitute an emergency, such as repainting or repairing light fixtures. However, checklists also help in the creation of an effective maintenance schedule.

On-time maintenance scheduling.

Maintenance scheduling is key to catching problems in the normal course of operations, especially in a restaurant. According to Scott Coomes of the Nation's Restaurant News, preventive maintenance can increase the longevity of equipment by tenfold, and since the maintenance is already planned, managers do not have to call in a work order or pay for an on-demand call, which further compounds savings.

Improved brand perception and recognition.

Consumer perception is among the most scrutinized parts of today's businesses. If a consumer sees anything out of place or in need of maintenance, it will probably appear on social media before they leave. The little things make a major difference. If the bathroom seems a bit unkempt and unsightly, consumers may not come back, resulting in lost revenue and damage to the brand.

Also, consumers come to a business because it has something they want. They want to eat or purchase other goods, but they do not want to deal with maintenance issues, such as out-of-order bathrooms or chipping door paint. A handyman program cuts this risk by getting to issues on time and reducing maintenance disruptions. Also, scheduled maintenance means fewer trips and lower repair costs. The business must be consumer-centric and give customers a place they want to come back to, not a place they felt "so-so" about.

Better efficiency through prioritization.

Preventive maintenance and scheduling also contribute to the creation of a prioritization schedule for repairs. In other words, profit-impacting issues can be addressed first, using past data to identify what maintenance problems have the greatest impact on overall profitability. Working with an external company to handle maintenance needs also increases a company's ability to assess its existing maintenance needs.

Tracked performance to prove value.

Comparing data from across the industry is an excellent way to prove the value of using a bundled handyman program. While this may not appear to be an immediate ROI, it does break down some of the objections stakeholders or executive-level leaders may have to continuing the use of an outsourced program.

More responsive customer service calls and managed repairs.

Bundled programs ensure transparency and accountability, preventing billing problems and delays when repairs are necessary.

Managers have plenty of responsibilities besides fixing things that break or are on the verge of failure. By handling all maintenance needs in one trip, bundled programs reduce the burden on managers to address problems and repairs. Thus, location managers see an increased ROI in routine duties as they focus on higher-priority issues, such as serving customers and managing employees. Plus, having a plan in place for routine repairs eliminates disruptions when a small problem can no longer go unnoticed. Think about it; no one wants to sit and enjoy a meal next to a bucket of paint.

Less liability and lower insurance premium costs and risks.

Everyone knows that one manager who can fix it all— he or she has climbed ladders to replace light bulbs, cleared obstructed vents and fixed the leaking toilet. Although handling these problems in-house sounds like a great idea, it is dangerous. What happens if the manager falls

from the ladder? The costs for a workplace injury could be much more than the cost of a bundled handyman program, not to mention the sudden hike in liability premiums.

Fortunately, outsourcing maintenance through a bundled handyman program places the need for liability protection on the external company and keeps a company's employees out of harm's way. Managers are hired to manage the facility, not be an impromptu maintenance person. By keeping managers and staff from stepping up that ladder and putting themselves at risk, bundled maintenance programs can actually save money, promoting a stronger, faster ROI.

Unlock Maintenance Savings Today

Companies considering expanding to new locations or struggling to keep up with existing maintenance needs should consider the benefits of a bundled handyman program and their ROI.

As Andrew Gager of Facilities Net explains, the lowest costs of maintenance may not necessarily mean the lowest price today, but the long-term costs of forgoing maintenance will be even greater. By investing in scheduled, bundled maintenance, your company will cut overhead maintenance expenses down the line.

To find out more about how a bundled handyman program can help your business thrive, contact a qualified service provider. Now, put that ladder back in the storage closet.

Eric Crabb is the Executive Vice President of QSI Facilities, which strives to raise the bar in terms of facilities maintenance customer service. As a one-stop shop, QSI offers full geographical coverage in the U.S. and Canada for on-demand repairs and programmed maintenance and includes a planned projects department to handle scheduled roll outs, capital work and more.