

What's your I(A)Q?

Indoor Air Quality has in some ways been a mystery. In general, from a cleaning professional's point of view, you'll find that there is superior messaging within marketing materials that substantiate this IAQ idea. However, positioning with a customer that your cleaning chemicals and your cleaning methodology promotes better indoor air quality is a "pie in the sky" idea for the field team executing the work. Further, most cleaning service providers understand the need that environmentally friendly messaging keeps them in the modern cleaning game or gives the perception that they are forward thinking. We cannot paint with a broad brush because the technical departments of some companies have spent countless hours partnering with engineers and designers getting specific. So specific, these chemicals used in this order in these intervals documented and calculated in this fashion can be presented to LEED-EBOM to get you points towards keeping up your buildings USGBC status, whether that may be Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum.

But, where did all of this come from? On one level, it is assumed that the elite thinkers have put together mechanisms with the ability to test indoor air quality in a vacuum so to speak. There is a study that was done in 1975 by three gentlemen that was submitted to the Journal of the Air Pollution Control Association. In this study they successfully attempt to study indoor air quality but at the beginning of the article they refer to the need for more studies on the indoor generation of contaminants! There have been thousands of articles and studies since and there continues to be a trend towards studying indoor air quality.

However, we could also answer the question, *where did this all come from?*, considering the historical perspective. What did men and women from 3100 BC think about indoor air quality? If we get even more granular, what did men and women from 3100 BC think about cleaning in general? The historical study of hygiene, cleaning and IAQ humanizes and helps everyone relate with the sometimes "pie in the sky" idea of IAQ. As one historian put it, "Among the hardest of a historian's jobs is to understand how people move from hope for a different future to practical actions that secure it." *What's Your I(A)Q* is a fun mashup of various articles, books (fiction and technical) and other professional presentations that attempts to give a high-level historical understanding of how hygiene, cleaning and therefore IAQ came to be so important. Additionally, what are still the challenges for the future?

Another interesting idea within the development of IAQ is how professionals have approached it in the past and what approaches are being utilized now. To illustrate a personal experience is appropriate. One of my wife's former teachers developed a rare form of cancer virtually untreatable with drugs and chemotherapy. However, her teacher can increase her life expectancy thereby decreasing the effects the cancer has on her life by 42% by simply exercising 20 minutes a day. Cancer revolutionizes life just by its diagnosis but a 20-minute walk each and everyday with loved ones in the face of a possible terminal illness also revolutionizes life. Just like this holistic approach to cancer treatment many IAQ professionals have recommended a holistic approach to buildings which we will uncover in *What's Your I(A)Q*.