



## **WORLD DRYER EXECUTIVE WHITE PAPER**

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**FACILITY APPEARANCES MATTER—  
ESPECIALLY IN THE RESTROOM**

Facility managers and other professionals responsible for a facility's design face myriad choices that have long-lasting implications for the safety, comfort and enjoyment of their facility by its occupants and visitors. One area that can significantly impact the overall impression of a facility is the appearance and function of the public restrooms. This White Paper, brought to you by World Dryer, will explore how making the right choice of restroom hand drying methods can positively impact the impression and experience of everyone who enters your facility.

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### WHY READ THIS WHITE PAPER?

An excellent article appeared in the April 2016 issue of ISSA Today, a worldwide cleaning industry association resource. The article discusses how human psychology influences our choices and impressions, moving beyond logic and hard data when it comes to perceptions of a facility. Citing some interesting research about purchase behaviors, the author, Mark Sisson, makes the following point:

***"Whether good or bad, the first piece of information we receive about a person or situation becomes an 'anchor detail' that will color our overall perception."***

Sisson uses an example familiar to all of us to illustrate this basic premise. Imagine you are getting ready to choose a food item to eat. While how it will taste is the most important thing you are ultimately interested in when selecting it, research has shown that the first "taste" of the food is actually done with the eyes. The appearance of food influences our judgment about how it will taste.

In other words, physical appearances matter a lot in shaping our impressions and experience. Whether you are a facility manager, or a professional responsible for designing a public restroom, that reality about the importance of physical appearances includes your facility's restroom.

With that in mind, think about the public restrooms in your facility for a moment. What this research is saying is that how your restroom "appears" to those who visit it will influence their perception of it—and your whole facility. And if it doesn't meet their expectations, that fact may undercut all the other things you do to ensure a positive customer experience.

***Sisson sees a bright side in all this research for facility managers and others responsible for designing or maintaining a facility.***

He believes there is a big opportunity to create environments that make a good "first impression" based on positive visible cues.

That means visitors to your facility are likely to size it up and compare it to other facilities based in part on the appearance of important common areas, such as the lobby, elevator and restrooms.

In this White Paper, we will explore the many ways that today's high-speed hand dryers can help improve tenant and visitor impressions of your facility, and deliver the excellent user experience you—and your building occupants—are looking for.



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# **1** DON'T RELY ON BUILDING OCCUPANTS TO KEEP YOUR RESTROOM LOOKING ATTRACTIVE

As a facility manager or professional charged with designing a public space, you are responsible for the health, safety and comfort of everyone who visits the facility. Accomplishing that requires anticipating how they will interact with every element in the space. It's a safe bet that in most situations, while users in your building will expect it to be attractive, they may not be willing to spend much of their time or energy taking steps to keep it that way.

That is one reason why paper towels do not make an optimum hand drying choice for public restrooms. On average, people use 2.5 paper towel sheets every time they dry their hands. Consider how many people will use the restroom daily in your facility and it isn't difficult to expect that there will be paper towel waste left on restroom lavatories, discarded on the floor or overflowing waste containers. Any time that happens, it erodes not only the impression of your facility for every restroom visitor, but the reality as well.

Today's high-speed hand dryers eliminate the potential for unsightly paper towel mess, reducing the risk for negative impressions and the burden on your janitorial staff.



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## 2 AESTHETIC DESIGN MATTERS

As discussed in the introduction to this White Paper, visual impressions provide strong signals to building occupants and visitors about your facility. A well-designed and attractive restroom facility will not only convey cleanliness, but also reflect positively on your building as a whole. Fortunately, today's hand dryers offer numerous physical design options with attractive lines and compact profiles to meet any décor.

Hand dryers come in both "hands under" and "hands in" styles. Many offer multiple choices when it comes to cover color as well as cover material (such as stainless steel, cast iron and cast aluminum). Choosing a durable cover material, such as cast iron, can also reduce the risk of surface marring and vandalism.

With so many choices, the hand dryers chosen for your facility can easily complement the overall look and feel of your restroom environment.



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## **3** ACOUSTICS ARE ALSO IMPORTANT

Every facility has its unique challenges, whether it's an office, a hospital, a school, a restaurant or some other environment. However, one concern that is common to these settings is noise. Research has shown that excessive noise can negatively impact productivity and increase stress in the workplace. Additionally, in settings where exceptional acoustic quality is essential, such as a school auditorium, peripheral or background noise has the potential to significantly erode the activities taking place and the audience experience.

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RESEARCH FIRM GLOBAL WORKPLACE  
ANALYTICS ESTIMATES THAT BUSINESSES  
LOSE \$600 BILLION A YEAR DUE TO  
WORKPLACE DISTRACTIONS.

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Restrooms are an area where the choice of ceiling, wall and floor finishes and the overall design can have a big impact on the amount of noise experienced within the restroom itself and in adjacent spaces. In environments that need to minimize sound from hand dryers, look for dryers that incorporate speed control features to adjust the sound level. By setting the dryer to a lower motor speed and air velocity, the hand dryer's sound level can be reduced to keep sound to a minimum when that is an important goal.

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## **4** QUICK DRY TIME PROMOTES A POSITIVE USER EXPERIENCE

One concern with older models of hand dryers was that they took a long time to dry hands and many users weren't willing to keep their hands under the nozzle long enough to get their hands completely dry. Having hands that weren't completely dry resulted in an unsatisfactory user experience for some restroom visitors. As a result, many people preferred paper towels to hand dryers because they found it quicker to use paper and—using plenty of paper towels—they could be sure their hands were thoroughly dry.

Fortunately, hand dryer technology has improved vastly over the years. With the advanced technology now available, there is no need to worry about user perceptions—they will truly appreciate the enhancements that high-speed hand dryers deliver for your facility.

Hand dryers are now available with drying speeds as little as 10-12 seconds. Compare that with the fact that most people need 2.5 sheets of paper towels each time they dry their hands and you will see the improvement in user convenience of hand dryers, not to mention the avoidance of the waste and sanitation risks that come with discarded, dirty paper towels.

Many of today's hand dryers also allow for heat or no heat operation, as well as the speed controls previously mentioned, which allow facility managers to customize the hand dryer's operation based on the conditions and requirements of the restroom application.

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## **5** HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY AND ADA COMPLIANCE

Handicap accessibility for hand dryers and compliance with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are two separate, but related, considerations when sourcing and installing hand dryers. For most hand dryers to be handicap accessible, World Dryer recommends that they be mounted with 37 inches from the floor to the bottom edge of the hand dryer to allow for access by a person in a wheelchair.

The requirements of the ADA cover nearly every aspect of building design, including the placement of restroom hand dryers. According to the ADA, objects mounted higher than 27 inches on a wall but less than 80 inches cannot protrude more than 4 inches from the wall. The purpose of the rule is to avoid a hazard for someone with a visual disability who is using a cane and may not detect the object in their path.

Up until a few years ago, that meant that hand dryers typically needed to be recessed in the wall to meet the 4 inch ADA standard. Special kits were offered to accomplish this recessed installation. However, hand dryers are now available that can be surface mounted and still meet the 4 inch ADA standard.





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## 6 THE IMPORTANCE OF RESTROOM HYGIENE CAN'T BE OVERSTATED

There was a time when the cleaning and maintenance of public restrooms was not much of a topic for discussion. However, with the heightened public awareness of dangerous infections such as MRSA and H1N1, the role of public restrooms in the transmission of these diseases has become a matter of heightened scrutiny. Now, facilities managers, acutely sensitive to hygienic issues, are finding themselves in a position of designing, renovating, operating, and cleaning public facilities to address these concerns that have refocused the public's attention on restroom cleanliness.

Because of the raised awareness surrounding the need to minimize or eliminate the risk of infection related to restrooms, terms such as "hands-free" and "touchless" have become commonplace among facilities managers and their patrons. The reality is no one wants to touch something where someone else's bacteria-laden hands may have been. Therefore, facilities managers are seeking alternatives such as motion-sensor soap dispensers, automatic faucets and touchless hand dryers that help eliminate the need to touch surfaces.

**ACCORDING TO A SURVEY BY CINTAS CORPORATION AND HARRIS INTERACTIVE, 94 PERCENT OF ADULTS WOULD AVOID A BUSINESS WHERE THEY ENCOUNTERED A DIRTY RESTROOM. SIMILARLY, 77 PERCENT OF THOSE SURVEYED SAID THAT THEY WOULD AVOID A FACILITY OF ANY KIND IF IT HAD DIRTY RESTROOMS.**

Of course, hand hygiene plays a fundamental role in minimizing the spread of infectious diseases, bacteria, viruses and parasites. Dangerous microorganisms and bacteria reside on the surface of the skin; however proper hand washing with soap and water, coupled with sanitary hand drying techniques, can dramatically reduce the spread of harmful disease and bacteria—especially in highly public areas such as food preparation institutions, school facilities, and clinical/medical environments.



As an added measure of sanitary control, manufacturers of hand dryers have developed technologies directly aimed at addressing these infectious diseases as well as improved efficiency and dry times. For example, some of the newer hand dryers feature embedded anti-microbial additives that use disinfectant substances to kill or inhibit the growth of microorganisms such as germs, mold, and bacteria as a way of further improving the hand hygiene process.

In fact, studies have shown that anti-microbial technology is 99% effective against e-coli and MRSA. Touchless hand dryer models prevent further contamination from buttons, knobs and levers, proving to be more sanitary than other hand drying alternatives.

Additionally, in recent years proactive hand dryer design teams have placed strict emphasis on drying time, product hygiene and consideration of the holistic hand hygiene process. Some manufacturers offer drying speeds as quick as 10-12 seconds help to ensure adequate drying that avoids the risk of water-based transfer of contaminants. Some units also include HEPA filtration to reduce contaminants in the air when hand drying.



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## 7 THE ENVIRONMENT IS EVERYONE'S CONCERN

There are many studies that show how much environmental quality can affect productivity as well as the image and reputation of a business. When it comes to conserving natural resources, replacing paper towels with hand dryers may at first appear to be simply trading off one set of carbon emissions for another. However, according to EPA estimates, producing a single ton of paper requires 7,000 gallons of water, 360 gallons of oil, 158 million BTUs of energy and as much as two to four tons of trees. Additionally, while it is possible to make paper towels from recycled paper, they are rarely, if ever, recycled, creating millions of cubic feet of waste in landfills.

By contrast, today's hand dryers are extremely energy efficient, using as little as 950 watts of power. Over its lifetime, one hand dryer will produce approximately three tons less CO<sub>2</sub> than the production of the paper towels it replaces.

It is also important to note that when constructing or renovating a building to meet the United States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, some hand dryer models can help qualify for LEED credits. Additionally, some hand dryers carry the GreenSpec-certification.



## A CASE STUDY: WHEATON ACADEMY

Wheaton Academy is a college preparatory, inter-denominational Christian high school founded in 1853. The Academy enrolls approximately 650 students in grades 9-12. Characterized by high academic standards and a mature student culture, the school sits on a beautiful 50-acre college-style campus with five facilities, including the Fine Arts Center and Heritage Field House. Recently during show intermissions at the Fine Arts Center, the head of the school saw students and parents waiting in line in a restroom to use old, slow hand dryers. Some frustrated restroom users would give up and leave with dripping, wet hands. The Academy decided it was time to upgrade its restroom hand dryers in three of its five facilities. One of the challenges in upgrading the hand dryers in the Fine Arts Center was to balance the need for faster, more powerful hand dryers with the necessity to keep noise to a minimum so as not to disturb the Center's events in the nearby auditorium. Another challenge the Academy faced was the hand dryers in the Field House had to be ADA compliant.



### The Solution

Richard Mills, of Wheaton Academy's maintenance department, began to research the different hand dryer manufacturers, even visiting different public locations in the community to test different models. It didn't take long to settle on World Dryer. The Academy at that time had hand dryers from various manufacturers, including several 30-year-old World Dryer workhorses. Mills was so impressed with their reliability and the trusted World Dryer brand that he decided to go with World Dryer for the upgrade, noting it was the only manufacturer with a portfolio of choices that fit the school's needs. Another factor in choosing World Dryer was the fact the sales representative actually brought different models of hand dryers to the Academy so Mills and other school officials could test them out in the school facilities to ensure the best fit.



For the Fine Arts Center, the Academy selected World Dryer's SMARTdri™ Plus because it is an energy efficient and hygienic high-speed hand dryer. SMARTdri Plus' intelligent and flexible controls allow customizing of high-speed air flow, sound quality and heating options. Maintenance could adjust the fast, powerful hand dryers with sound at a minimum level so as not to disturb performances.

In the Field House, ADA concerns led to the selection of the rapid-dry SLIMdri™ hand dryers, which are 40 percent faster and 70 percent more energy efficient than other surface-mounted ADA hand dryers. For the third facility, the Academic Building, Wheaton Academy installed World Dryer's AirMax™ hand dryers that feature high-speed dry times of under 15 seconds and use only 50 percent of the energy traditional hand dryers require.

The school ordered all the dryers to be automatic, hands-free and stainless steel for better sanitary conditions. Mills said the energy efficiency of the dryers—SMARTdri Plus hand dryers use only 12 percent of the energy of traditional dryers—was also important as it helped reduce the electrical load on the Academy's branch circuit. That was an important consideration given how many devices students and teachers plug into classroom outlets these days, Mills noted.

### Impact on Learning

Mills said the Academy never considered paper towel dispensers for restrooms. "It just becomes a huge mess. You have paper towels all over the floor and everywhere. Too often, they get thrown around, or they get flushed and the plumbing suffers." Mills reports the Academy is very pleased with the new hand dryers and particularly how each different World Dryer model from its full line of hand dryers has served a different purpose and fulfilled the different needs of each facility. He said teachers have even expressed surprise with how well they work, and World Dryer's customer service has been top notch. "World Dryer understood that we had different needs for hand drying in each of our buildings, such as speed, sound and being ADA compliant," Mills said. "All the hand dryers are high quality and have their purpose. They took the time to understand our concerns and offer us the right solutions. World Dryer offers extra services that other companies don't. We couldn't be happier."

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## SUMMING IT ALL UP

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The appearance of a public building's lobby, elevator and restrooms are the three most critical areas that create first—and lasting—impressions with many the building's occupants and visitors. For facility managers and others responsible for ensuring a positive customer experience, careful consideration of how everyone will perceive and interact with every element of the physical facility is critical to success.

For the many reasons explored in this White Paper, choosing feature-rich high-speed hand dryers for your facility's restrooms will go a long way toward ensuring that the quality experience you strive for will be reinforced every time your facility's restrooms are visited.