



CASE STUDY

FOOD RETAIL SOFT SERVICES

TRANSFORMING RETAIL CLEANING STANDARDS

In May 2016, Arcus was awarded a cleaning services contract for 35 main stores and 15 convenience stores in Scotland due to the innovative approach we took to addressing poor performance and cleaning standards. Since then, our success has resulted in a nationwide expansion to 17 regions covering 320 main stores and 52 convenience stores, delivering measurable productivity improvements and cost savings for our customer. Our efforts have transformed cleaning standards, positioning Arcus as the leading provider of cleaning services within the customer's estate.

APPROACH

Arcus adopted a collaborative and data-driven approach to improving cleaning standards, engaging stakeholders at all levels. The process began with mapping current operations through dynamic needs analysis, capturing insights from staff, the business, and customers. Day-in-the-life observations were conducted with cleaning teams to identify operational challenges, ensuring a clear understanding of daily demands.

Frontline experts and management were actively engaged to align roles and responsibilities, creating a structured and efficient workflow. Observations and photographic evidence were used to develop a future-state cleaning model that addressed key risks and opportunities.

To secure buy-in, communication was prioritised at all levels, with strong visual management reinforcing the proposed changes. The new model was then implemented with a knowledge transfer process, ensuring that improvements were embedded and sustained across operations. This comprehensive and inclusive approach resulted in clear, actionable strategies tailored to operational needs.



FEATURES

The cleaning programme introduced key features to enhance efficiency and consistency. Full data and P&L reviews aligned costs with operational goals, ensuring financial sustainability.

Stakeholder engagement fostered collaboration and supported the dynamic needs assessment that identified inefficiencies for targeted improvement and an activity review that optimised productivity and resource use. A scalable future-state cleaning programme was developed for national rollout.

Regular SOFT (Success, Opportunities, Failures, Threats) reports provided transparency and drove continuous improvement.

This structured approach established a scalable framework for high-quality cleaning services across multiple locations.

OPPORTUNITIES

Our new model identified key opportunities to improve cleaning operations with core cleaning and housekeeping activities streamlined, and new equipment trialled to increase efficiency in daily operations.

Cleaning task cards supported process auditing and defined responsibilities, ensuring consistency across sites. "What good looks like" standards aligned expectations between customer teams and Arcus colleagues, reinforcing a shared commitment to quality.

A dedicated standards team was established to oversee consistency and maintain service excellence. A flexible cleaning model was designed for nationwide implementation.

These improvements strengthened Arcus's ability to drive operational efficiency and cost savings while delivering a more effective cleaning service.



BENEFITS

The benefits of Arcus's innovative cleaning model have delivered significant efficiencies and cost savings. By reducing housekeeping hours by 546 per store annually, the programme has achieved savings of £990k. Additional efficiencies in morning cleaning hours have contributed to £2.1m in annual savings, while further reductions in housekeeping and evening cleaning hours have resulted in an extra £2.2m in savings each year.

A targeted focus on high-footfall areas has optimised resource allocation, ensuring cleaning efforts are prioritised where they have the greatest impact during peak periods. Most importantly, the model has fostered a culture shift, with teams embracing and sustaining the new ways of working, reinforcing continuous improvement and operational excellence.

KEY OUTCOMES

Arcus's cleaning services now set the benchmark for excellence. By transforming underperforming stores into top-performing sites, we have strengthened customer relationships and delivered consistent year-on-year improvements. Our efforts have demonstrated Arcus's ability to enhance operational efficiency, drive cost savings, and deliver best-in-class service across the customer's estate.