NEW AGE OF CLEANING WILL BE DRIVEN BY EMERGING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY – REPORT

With COVID-19 expected to stimulate innovation in retail, leisure and workplace hygiene, Oakland Innovation says science-led approaches will underpin the efficacy of cleaning products and strategies.

Product development experts at Oakland believe heightened awareness of hygiene will continue beyond this pandemic to become a lasting trend. This will have implications for a wide range of settings as people return to work or education and resume leisure activities.

The pandemic has also driven extensive global research into the nature of the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes COVID-19. Scientists are working to establish its survival on various materials and in different environments. Others are investigating the virus's transferability to humans and the ability of cleaning products and strategies to inactivate it.

This convergence of hygiene awareness and scientific research creates a fertile environment for ground-breaking innovation. Facilities managers are placing greater emphasis on cleaning strategies, and businesses operating in the hygiene space have an opportunity to leverage the latest insights to reduce or prevent virus transmission.

Oakland recently published a paper exploring current and emerging research which could inform future development. It looks at new chemistries which can augment product functionality, for instance by adding sensory cues so the user knows when a surface has been thoroughly cleaned. More pioneering technologies and solutions are also considered, including novel coatings, cleaning devices and biological strategies such as the use of glycoprotein on textiles to trap viruses.

Dr Eileen Buttimer, managing partner - consumer advisory at Oakland, authored the paper. She says product manufacturers that collaborate with third parties to unlock scientific understanding could fast-track effective solutions that inspire user confidence: "Right now, chemical products are the backbone of the hygiene market, but future

innovation is likely to draw on a range of strategies in addition to this. On the one hand there may be opportunities to enhance the functionality of existing chemical formulations by improving their efficacy or duration of action. However, there is also potential for alternative approaches that don't involve chemicals. For instance, heating a contaminated surface can have a significant impact on its viral load, and electrostatic cleaning is gaining a lot of attention too."

Dr Eileen Buttimer continued: "Current studies on viral survival are generating a wealth of data that is waiting to be harnessed by product developers. Brands that develop effective solutions and engage with facilities or venue managers to devise cleaning best practice are likely to lead the market as it evolves."

Oakland Innovation is part of Science Group and combines scientific expertise with deep market knowledge and extensive industry reach to inspire and accelerate innovation. Its whitepaper, 'How will COVID-19 change consumer attitudes and behaviours', is available to download.

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