

Monday, October 18, 2010

## **#Staples Inc. Study: Hand Hygiene Starts With Sanitary Workplace**

Staples Survey Finds Germs Are Increasingly Joining the Work Force  
Oct 16, 2010 (Close-Up Media via COMTEX) -- A new study shows that many office workers feel compelled to be in the office when they're sick while few take enough steps to keep their workspace clean.

A recent survey by Staples Advantage, the business-to-business division of Staples, Inc., reveals that 65 percent of workers reported coming to work sick, while 80 percent reported cleaning their workspace only once a week or less. At that rate, keeping germs at bay in the office is a staggering task.

**Studies estimate about 40,000 people will get the flu this year and a study by Challenger, Gray & Christmas estimates the flu alone results in approximately 70 million missed work days and nearly \$10 billion in lost productivity each year.**

"Employers are concerned about decreased productivity due to sick employees and are looking for ways to maintain healthy workspaces throughout their facilities," said Lisa Hamblet, vice president for Staples Advantage and head of its Facility Solutions line of business. "With employees coming to work sick, it's difficult to prevent germs from invading the office altogether. [There are easy preventive measures that can minimize the spread of germs within the facility and keep the business going.](#)" With another flu season upon us, cleaning experts at Staples Facility Solutions have prepared a tip sheet with easy steps employers can take to maintain a healthy workforce.

Make hand and surface sanitizing products easily accessible throughout the office. Sanitizers reduce germs and bacteria by 99.9 percent. Another study by reported a 21 percent reduction of absenteeism with hand sanitizer on the desktop. But only 38 percent of workers surveyed have started using disinfectant wipes since the H1N1 outbreak.

Supply tissues and educate the office about "respiratory etiquette." A surprising 68 percent of workers surveyed reported seeing coworkers sneezing or coughing without using a tissue or covering their mouth.

Set Aside Time at Work for Personal Clean Up. By setting aside a time for all employees to clean and sanitize their workspace and providing

sanitizing wipes, paper towels and spray, employers can create a more "germ" conscious workforce and a healthier office. This is particularly necessary with the number of people who eat at their workspace, a surprising 92 percent of workers according to the Staples Advantage survey.

Encourage proper handwashing. A building-wide hand washing campaign can be an effective way to remind workers to wash hands for at least 20 seconds as recommended by the Center for Disease Control. Provide touch-free soap and towel dispensers to further minimize the spread of germs.

Survey participants reinforce that they want employers to get involved in preventing illness around the work place. More than half the respondents (54 percent) said employers should provide "touch-free" restroom products and 40 percent indicated flu shots should be administered at the office.

Staples Advantage conducted an online survey of office workers at more than 100 businesses of all sizes across the US. The survey, conducted in August, asked a series of questions about workplace hygiene and its overall impact in today's business environment.