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# Sustainability, reducing waste and SYR Interchange

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> Scot Young Research



# Introduction

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Cleaning has always been a plastic-reliant sector, the material found at every stage of the manufacturing process and at all levels of the industry. Appearing as a primary component in a wide range of hygiene products, plastic can be found in everything from single-use cleaning cloths to large cleaning trolleys, used on a daily basis in cleaning routines all over the world. As useful as these materials are, it can't be denied that the dependence on plastic can have, and indeed is having, a negative effect on the environment.



The reasons why plastic has become such an indispensable material can be boiled down in many cases to three main factors: its cost effectiveness, its versatility and its durability. The latter, whilst obviously being a huge benefit when in use, is what can often make it so harmful to the environment when disposed of. Plastic takes a very long time to break down when discarded in landfill, with the material remaining present on the earth for many years, even centuries in the worst of cases.





## > TRENDS OF SUSTAINABILITY IN CLEANING

Whilst, as one might expect, the top priority considered in the selection of cleaning products is their efficacy, and how well they perform in eliminating bacteria from surfaces, there has been a noticeable trend towards overall sustainability in cleaning in recent years. Echoing changing attitudes across multiple industries and societies, where awareness of humanity's impact on the natural world has grown exponentially, there is increasing evidence to suggest that both manufacturers and end users of cleaning equipment are demanding improvements at every level - including manufacture, use of the product and disposal - in pursuit of sustainability.

When the trend towards green cleaning first grew in popularity in the 1990s, it was widely considered a fad, with products produced that claimed to have a range of environmental benefits but did not perform effectively when in use. This is no longer the case however; as a result of continuous technological advancements and widespread effort into the cause, green cleaning has evolved from a marketing ploy into a genuine alternative to traditional plastic cleaning products.

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At current, striving for sustainability in cleaning has become a top priority, considered alongside product efficacy, efficiency and ergonomics when selecting equipment to use in cleaning routines. As of 2021, despite a brief lull in the 'green' trend as the coronavirus pandemic caused businesses to switch to disposable alternatives, almost one-third of total sales of cleaning products can be labelled eco-friendly, and 50% of end users still consider a product's potential in achieving sustainability vital in making purchase decisions.



In addition to the environmental benefits of reducing the total amount of waste produced, preventing significant amounts of material from ending up in landfill, products that are designed with sustainability in mind are usually made to last, with a durable construction intended to withstand repeated use over a longer period of time. This can often result in substantial cost savings over time, ideal for businesses which consistently must cope with demands levelled at cleaning facilities management teams to reduce costs.

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## > SYR INTERCHANGE

With this in mind, using the constant innovation that allowed SYR to become an industry-leader, SYR turned our attention to creating a range of products that not only worked to reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfill, but to also provide cleaning teams with a simple yet dependable solution to a multitude of cleaning tasks. The result was SYR Interchange, a collection of tool handles that could be used with a wide variety of compatible cleaning products.

Available in different lengths and styles, as well as a fully colour-coded range, Interchange handles were expressly developed for versatile cleaning regimens. An all-in-one system, each Interchange handle can be affixed with a cleaning head of choice with a simple screw-fitting, designed to provide cleaning operatives with maximum efficiency during busy routines. From mops and squeegees, to scrapers and brooms, the Interchange range encompasses a diverse collection of products ideal for different cleaning tasks, with new products added to the range all the time.





Typically, when cleaning products are manufactured with an attached handle, the head of the cleaning tool, whether it be a mop head, broom or any other product, will undoubtedly become worn with repeated use much faster than the handle itself. Thus, when the product is disposed of so it can be replaced, a large volume of still usable material, usually substances like plastic, metal or wood, is sent to landfill. Not only will this have a negative impact on the environment, but can accumulate into high costs for businesses, stemming from the disposal of significant portions of waste and the continuous purchase of new products.

Created a counterpoint to this wasteful practice, SYR Interchange handles, with their innovative fitting, allow cleaning tools to be quickly and easily changed so that handles can be used for another purpose. Rather than being sent to landfill, these durable handles, made from high quality materials, can be used time and time again, with only the head replaced when necessary.





As well as reducing waste, the Interchange range vastly simplifies cleaning routines. Rather than using a complex number of different cleaning tools within one shift, with Interchange operatives can use just one handle when cleaning a particular area, fitting the appropriate head, also available colour-coded for maximum hygiene and protection against cross-contamination, necessary for each task. In addition to improving efficiency, allowing operatives to switch between tasks much quicker, Interchange can also contribute to minimising strain injuries in cleaning staff, a common complaint reported by those working in this field, by reducing the amount of heavy equipment that must be carried between areas over the course of a shift.

It was the development of this range specifically that caused SYR to be awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise: Innovation in 2002. A true testament to not only SYR continuous research and development in pursuit of innovation, but also the changing priorities in cleaning within the last few decades, SYR Interchange is a simple yet effective way of revolutionising cleaning routines, providing trusted solutions to improve businesses' efficiency and sustainability.







## References

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