

The Clean Hands Company®: Market Selection

In 1997, Raymond Johnson, founder and president of the Clean Hands Company®, was using the public lavatory of his local supermarket when he saw an employee return to work without washing his hands. Later, while strolling the aisles, Johnson found that same employee handling meat in the supermarket's butcher shop. Ray's concern prompted him to design the Clean Hands Advanced Hand-Washing Monitor™.

Using state-of-the-art motion sensors, electronics, and computer imaging algorithms, the Clean Hands Advanced Hand-Washing Monitor™ promises supermarket owners, restaurateurs, and institutional and hospitality managers full hand-washing compliance among employees in a short period of time. Additionally, its One Minute Manager, which requires little oversight, allows real-time monitoring and historic analysis of individual or aggregate behaviors. Finally, unlike other camera-based systems, the Clean Hands Advanced Hand-Washing Monitor™ does not invade employee privacy.

How does the system work? An employee, wearing an electronic badge, enters the lavatory, where a wall-mounted radio frequency detector recognizes and identifies him/her. The employee applies an amount of soap to his/her hands, rubbing vigorously, then presents the lathered hands to the monitor, which, after analyzing the hands, gives a pass or fail information, along with time and date stamps and employee identification. The information can be used by management for punishments, rewards, board of health reports, consumer complaints, etc.

Preview copy.

To view the full mini-case, please purchase it from WDI-Publishing.com

Johnson is convinced that the Clean Hands Advanced Hand-Washing Monitor™ is a great technology, and that it could be a huge success if marketed properly. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests that hand-washing — a vigorous rubbing together of all surfaces with soap, followed by a water rinse — is the single most important factor for preventing the spread of infectious disease. But is that only in the United States? Surely there must be other countries in which Clean Hands Advanced Hand-Washing Monitor™ could be sold.

Published by WDI Publishing, a division of the William Davidson Institute (WDI) at the University of Michigan.

©2015 John Branch. This case was written by John Branch, Lecturer of Marketing and Strategy, at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. This case was created to be a basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either the effective or ineffective handling of a situation.
