



Rising to an Unprecedented Challenge

The cleaning products industry's response to COVID-19

January–August 2020





An Essential Response to Urgent Needs

The COVID-19 pandemic that has swept the world has, in just a few months, changed enormously the way we live, work and play.

It has required a response from governments, healthcare bodies, businesses and all of us that is, quite simply, without precedent.

Everyone has had to make sacrifices. Routines and habits we once took for granted have had to stop, or have at least been heavily impacted. Many of us have had to stay at home to keep ourselves and others safe, and millions of people and their families have

suffered hardship, unemployment or, sadly, the tragic loss of loved ones.

Personal hygiene and disinfection have been essential to combating COVID-19. It quickly became clear that a massive effort would be needed to support healthcare and other front-line sectors, as demand spiked seemingly overnight by as much as 500 percent.¹ Cleaning product companies ramped up production, resulting in volume increases of sanitizer products upward of 60 percent.² But even with this massive mobilization, people across the U.S. experienced product shortages and empty shelves in shops and supermarkets.

Companies had to be creative in finding solutions to problems they never previously faced. First and foremost, protections needed to be put in place to safeguard employees' health and safety, while production accelerated and was kept running 24/7 to keep pace with demand. Manufacturers had to prioritize for critical needs and shift production lines and staff resources. Supply chains were stretched, leading to the need to overcome major raw material, ingredient, packaging and pump shortages as other industries became overwhelmed by the demand or limited in production capacity due to the pandemic's restrictions.

ACI is proud of how our industry has stepped up by increasing production, providing families with resources on effective cleaning and hygiene practices, giving back to communities and upholding commitments to corporate responsibility and sustainability. While the crisis has brought terrible consequences for individuals and communities everywhere, it has also reinforced the value and need for the cleaning products industry to work toward our long-term, ultimate goals of helping people lead healthier, happier lives and building a vibrant and sustainable future.

¹ [Further details](#)

² [Further details](#)

Our Industry Impact in Numbers

In the U.S. and globally, the cleaning products industry supported relief efforts, food banks, healthcare workers and local communities financially, and with donations of products and personal protective equipment.

Companies throughout the supply chain rallied to bring on new production of hand sanitizers, most of which were donated in support of communities and front-line workers. The data that follows, acquired from members directly and from publicly available company statements, captures how the industry collectively responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Donations

Product and personal protective equipment in U.S. (units)

10M

Cleaning products and sanitizer in U.S. (units)

7M

In-kind U.S. (USD)

\$99M

In-kind global (USD)

\$709M

Production

New production of hand sanitizer globally by ingredient suppliers (gallons)

427,000

Average increase in production volume of cleaning and sanitizing products³

23%

³ By cleaning product formulators compared to first half of year in 2019.



Mobilizing Into Action

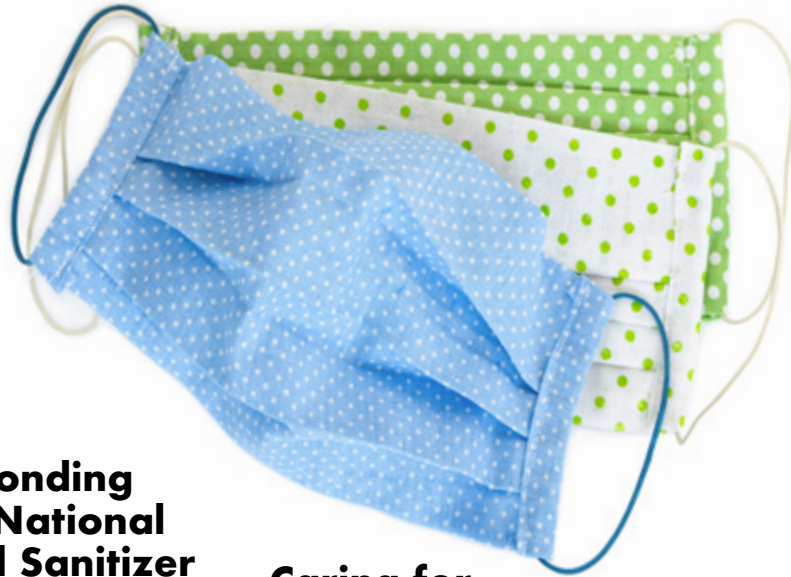
Across the cleaning product supply chain, companies have increased production, adapted manufacturing lines to make additional soap and hand sanitizer, donated money and resources, and taken extra measures to protect their employees from COVID-19.

The following stories are a few examples of how people are continuing to work hard to keep their colleagues, front-line workers and communities safe and healthy.



Responding to a National Hand Sanitizer Shortage

[Read more](#)



Caring for Colleagues and the Community

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Taking a Load off the Shoulders of Front-Line Responders

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Responding to a National Hand Sanitizer Shortage

When Patrick Harris, Senior Director, R&D at SC Johnson, first sent out a note asking for volunteers to make hand sanitizer for donation to first responders, health workers and the company's own production employees, he wasn't sure what response he was going to get. His team members, who had been working from home, typically didn't staff production lines.

Nevertheless, every person he asked was willing to help. Managers across the company gave their support, allowing team members to take time away from their regular projects to help convert a line typically reserved for testing new products and run it to make hand sanitizer.

Patrick and his team of volunteer line workers moved quickly to build out new capacity at Waxdale, the company's largest global

manufacturing facility, located in Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin. Their goal: to manufacture up to 75,000 bottles of hand sanitizer per month.

About a week after their first meeting, the volunteers started making their first bottles of hand sanitizer. As they received additional equipment, they optimized the layout of the processing area to run the line faster and produce more, while also ensuring that appropriate social distancing and other safety precautions were in place. At times, this layout changed daily as they continued to improve their process.

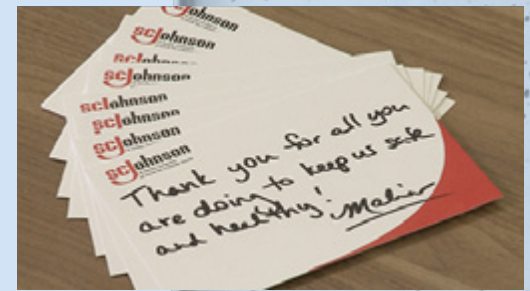
To help jump-start production, the team at SC Johnson partnered with Dow, which made a one-time contribution of bulk hand sanitizer to produce 25,000 eight-ounce bottles. SC Johnson returned approximately 12,500 bottles to

Dow for distribution to Dow's production sites to help protect its employees. In the following months, the converted line run by volunteer employees helped to produce approximately 300,000 bottles of hand sanitizer for donation to those on the front lines.

As a special thanks to front-line workers, the volunteers put personal notes of gratitude and encouragement into the cases of donated hand sanitizer.

“Every single person we asked was willing to help. I’ve had managers from across the company come to me and tell me they have other employees that want to help out.”

Patrick Harris
Senior Director, R&D, SC Johnson



Caring for Colleagues and the Community

For Pilot Chemical Company and Erin Isaacs, Plant Manager of Pilot's Avenel plant in New Jersey, keeping the team healthy and safe during the pandemic has been the number one priority. Because the plant employees manufacture the ingredients that go into cleaning products and detergents, they're considered essential workers. In accordance with company policy, Erin ensures that numerous safety measures are implemented properly, including maximum social distancing, routine temperature checks and regular deep cleaning.

Team members have also helped each other minimize exposure risks by combining grocery lists to reduce visits to supermarkets and wearing masks well before the state order was mandated. When masks were in short supply, one team member sewed hundreds for the plant's employees and their families.

The team really wanted to give back to the community as well, so a group led by Sarah Mester, Pilot's Director of Corporate Development, banded together in April to form a new, company-wide Healthy Neighbors initiative.

Though Pilot doesn't normally make hand sanitizer and liquid soap, it does manufacture the building blocks for them. Sarah worked with her team to figure out production logistics, while Erin identified organizations – including first responders, assisted living facilities, hospitals and nonprofits providing essential social services – that would benefit from donated supplies of these items.

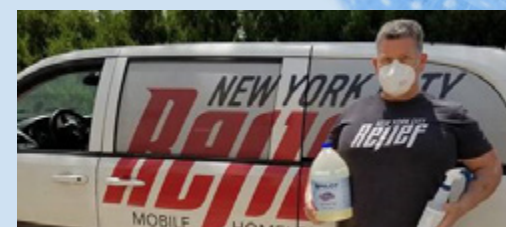
Sourcing spray bottles for hand sanitizer was challenging, as both nozzle and fingertip spray supplies were extremely limited. After exhausting conventional sources, Erin made frequent trips to the beauty supply stores in her area to find alternatives.

The Pilot team continues to hand-label, hand-bottle and, for the most part, hand-deliver everything they donate. Erin is proud to have seen the initiative take off. She believes the experience has strengthened team bonds, not only among the members and herself but also with the larger community.

“All of us at Pilot Chemical take pride in doing what we can to help. Our team has poured a lot of love into our Healthy Neighbors initiative and I’m proud to be a part of it. We’re taking care of each other and looking out for one another, and that’s here to stay.”

Erin Isaacs

Plant Manager, Pilot Chemical Company



Taking a Load off the Shoulders of Front-Line Responders

Since 2005, Procter & Gamble's (P&G) Tide Loads of Hope program has been providing free laundry services to communities affected by natural disaster. Over the years, the P&G team has learned that these aren't the only times when people need help with clean clothes. Offering free laundry services during the COVID-19 pandemic was, as Moses Ogonnaya, Chief Marketing Officer – Tide Cleaners, put it, the least they could do for busy front-line responders and their families.

However, in the midst of the pandemic, Tide Loads of Hope's normal method of deploying its laundry services via truck was no longer safe. Then Moses came up with an idea: What if they could mobilize Tide Cleaners storefronts across the nation to provide free laundry and dry cleaning?

He and his team talked about the idea for a week, then launched Tide Loads of Hope Powered by Tide Cleaners in three cities: Houston, Indianapolis and Phoenix. They weren't sure how it was going to go, but decided to give it a try to see what impact it would have on the communities.

After launching in late March, they ramped up over the following three weeks to have Tide Loads of Hope available across almost 95 percent of stores and locker locations. They deployed so quickly because the front-line responders were so thankful for the service.

In three months, Tide Loads of Hope impacted twice as many people as in the last 15 years. What's more, many locations that previously had to lay off their employees due to declining business were able to hire back their employees.

Across 179 stores and over 2,000 locker locations, Tide Cleaners provided free laundry and dry cleaning to over 100,000 front-line responders. For Moses, this is just the tip of the iceberg. It indicates what Tide Loads of Hope can do going forward, and he's excited about how the program can continue to make a positive impact on communities.

“Just to see the impact that we can make on one individual was worth it.”

Moses Ogonnaya
Chief Marketing Officer – Tide Cleaners,
Procter & Gamble



Preventing the Transmission of Infections in Hospitals

Cheryl Littau, Ph.D., Corporate Scientist, is passionate about Ecolab's hand hygiene technology. Why? Because when healthcare workers are rushing to help a critically ill patient survive, hand hygiene likely isn't top of mind, and yet it's crucial to preventing the transmission of infections, especially during the pandemic.

Traditionally, hand hygiene compliance monitoring is done through direct observation by staff or volunteers. When Cheryl performed the task, she found it was easy to miss hand hygiene behaviors by looking away for even a moment.

To help hospitals acquire accurate data, the company incorporated monitoring technology into its hand sanitizer and soap dispensers. Ecolab's system arms each healthcare worker with a wearable badge that communicates with sensors inside the dispensers and beacons on

beds, chairs and stretchers. If a worker approaches a patient without using a dispenser first, the badge reminds them with a flashing light or an audible signal.

Customizable, clinician-friendly dashboards collect data on individual hand hygiene behaviors, measure compliance and pinpoint precisely where action is needed. These insights allow hospitals and clinicians to drive improvements, standardize workflows and keep patients and staff safe.

One feature of these dashboards that's taken on particular significance during the pandemic is the contact investigator report. This lets hospitals know in minutes which badged clinicians had contact with a patient or their room – much faster and less labor intensive than looking through schedules.

The pandemic has also required Cheryl and the Ecolab team to adapt how they work. Instead of visiting hospitals to update badge settings, the team now uses a recently launched solution to make the updates remotely. Cheryl can see this faster, easier process benefiting hospitals even after the pandemic.

For Cheryl and the Ecolab team, the motivation to continue improving the technology comes from being able to create greater satisfaction with the system and ultimately better hand hygiene compliance – a key weapon in helping break chains of transmission.

“If it reminds them to perform hand hygiene and takes care of the healthcare workers and patients that day, that's huge.”

Cheryl Littau, Ph.D.
Corporate Scientist, Ecolab



Making Public Spaces Safer for Communities

As organizations across the U.S. began to reopen, they needed to create new protocols. While Clorox's role had traditionally been in the household and healthcare spaces, the company quickly realized that as a trusted brand with a long history of disinfection expertise, it could help other organizations make public spaces safer for communities.

Heath Rigsby, Vice President and Commercial Leader of the newly formed Out of Home team, leads a group of ten people who collaborate with large organizations on their cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Over just four months, Clorox has worked with United Airlines, AMC Theaters, Cleveland Clinic, Uber, and the NBA and WNBA.

Every Clorox collaboration begins with understanding each company's unique customer journey. With United Airlines, the Clorox team focused on creating a safer environment for passengers, from arriving at the airport to boarding the plane. From there, the teams were able to put together a protocol tailored to the needs of a United Airlines customer.

For Clorox, the focus is on long-term relationships with organizations that share Clorox's commitment to public health and safety. Heath thinks about both what the organizations are going to do now and what their plan will be for the years to come. He also has to consider the incredibly high demand for disinfecting products – especially as Clorox continues to prioritize healthcare facilities, front-line workers and existing customers.

With new collaborations, the Out of Home team starts small and creates plans that will scale up over time as Clorox's supply increases.

These efforts are critical to Heath because they get at the heart of Clorox's mission – to champion a cleaner and safer future where people thrive. They also allow Clorox to help create environments where people can feel safe and secure.

“Our expertise in product technology, learnings in the healthcare space on protocols, safety and prevention, and the trust of the Clorox brand gave us a unique opportunity to work with organizations to develop and improve their plans.”

Heath Rigsby

Vice President – Out of Home
Commercial Leader, The Clorox Company



Sharing Critical Information

Providing clear and accurate information on how to stay safe and healthy was, and continues to be, a key part of combating the pandemic. ACI responded with a range of timely COVID-19 communications.

FEBRUARY 2020 **MARCH 2020** **MARCH-APRIL 2020** **APRIL 2020 ONWARD**



Clear, expert advice 24/7

ACI created a concise and **regularly updated** [Coronavirus and Cleaning](#) webpage on hand hygiene and surface disinfection.

53,000+

page views since launch.⁴



Authoritative response to media

ACI quickly became the **go-to source** for media inquiries on cleaning for COVID-19.

736

related mentions and a total potential reach of 2.6 billion.⁵



In step with emerging knowledge

ACI answered **consumers' pressing questions** as new information on COVID-19 emerged:

- Web chat hosted by **The Washington Post** and multiple Twitter chats hosted with partners – compiled by ACI into a [Coronavirus Cleaning FAQ](#) webpage



Research insights and educational messaging

An ACI-commissioned survey found that **42%** of Americans were **not disinfecting properly** and more than **one-third** were **not following proper hand hygiene practices**.

ACI used these insights for engaging campaigns:

- [#CleanWhereYouAre](#) for National Cleaning Week in March
- 30-day [#SafeAndCleanAtHome](#) challenge in April with daily posts, tips and fun ideas, followed by broader “Safe and Clean Everywhere” messaging

127 million+

impressions⁶ across the campaigns.



Customized resources for critical audiences

As the new long-term cleaning and disinfecting needs became increasingly clear, ACI developed further, tailored guidance:

- Advice to **reopening businesses** through the [Healthy Returns](#) toolkit
- Through the [Healthy Schools, Healthy People](#) program, **resources provided for schools** on proper handwashing, cleaning and disinfecting, based on feedback from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Association of School Nurses

⁴From February 28 to August 31, 2020.

⁵From January 1 to August 31, 2020. Reach calculated by adding unique visitors per month for online outlets, circulation for print outlets and viewership for broadcast programs.

⁶From March 1 to August 31, 2020.



Working for a Healthy and Sustainable Return

The global pandemic has had a devastating effect on communities, businesses and individuals across the U.S. and throughout the world, and the long-term impacts are still largely unknown.

2020 has reminded us all how fragile our society can be. Long-standing inequities have been exposed and environmental issues remain as critical as ever. Cleaning products and hygiene practices have been vital in preventing the spread of infection, but climate change has not gone away and the pandemic is amplifying the already critical concerns about plastic waste. On an array of social and environmental challenges, serious action is called for.

As an industry, we believe it is imperative not to return to business as usual, but rather to use this opportunity to move us closer to a more sustainable future. Although

production has skyrocketed and sourcing and distribution challenges have arisen as a result of increased demand, the cleaning products industry continues to prioritize sustainability.

Amidst uncertainty about what the post-pandemic future holds, we do know that, more than ever, we must continue to take urgent steps as an industry to build a better, cleaner world – learning from the experience of the crisis, building on the resilience we have gained and redoubling our efforts.

Supporting health and well-being for all, preventing climate change, reimagining our recycling system and

achieving the ambitions of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals will all take coordinated global action and collaboration. By [Uniting for a Cleaner World](#), setting bold ambitions and making measurable progress, we are confident our industry can provide its essential service while doing its part to ensure future generations have resources to meet their needs.

“We want to ensure we’re meeting the urgent needs of today, without forgetting tomorrow.”

Melissa Hockstad
President & CEO,
American Cleaning Institute

Thank you

This impact report is intended to share how the U.S. cleaning products industry has collectively responded to the challenge presented by COVID-19 in 2020. Industry data within this report is for January 1 to August 31, 2020, acquired from members directly and from publicly available company statements.

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