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## ImageFIRST Partners with Clients

*Focus on the Human Experience*

**By Barbara R. Fallon**

Before, during and after the COVID crisis, ImageFIRST held its ranking as the largest national linen provider specializing in the medical market. They remained a leader in infection prevention and efficient inventory management, providing comprehensive, quality linen and laundry programs.

That foundation earned ImageFIRST a competitive edge when hurdling COVID-19 challenges. With the marriage of quality and

operational efficiency intact, they enhanced their safety response building on the performance of associates whose customer service attitudes are in sync with their health care clients' priorities for patient care, staff empowerment and customer satisfaction.

## **Enhancing the Human Experience**

Now they are navigating the 'post' COVID environment – focusing on enhancing the human experience, according to Jay Juffre, Executive Vice President, as it affects patients, staff, visitors and the community-at-large.



Jay Juffre,  
Executive Vice  
President

"Patient care will always be about being great at what you do clinically, but patient experience is all about how you do it. Perceptions of patients, staff, and visitors go a long way in shaping our reality," he said.

While hospital personnel often think about how their 'bedside manner' impacts their success in connecting and establishing trust with patients, ImageFIRST steps in to help staff have that time to connect with patients instead of looking for an isolation gown, traipsing to the hospital laundry to find clean scrubs, dealing with a patient's discomfort due to an uncomfortable or dirty gown, or worrying if the gowns or linens are sanitary.

Juffre outlined their 5-point product quality metric. "Our

clients receive a 'Clean You Can Count On' quality assurance process, ensuring that they get premium products, tested for quality and durability; the highest sanitizing standards, meeting company's bright white standard; hand inspected, plastic-wrapped linens and gowns and uniforms that are fresh and clean. And, all our cleaning processes must pass strict independent laboratory testing," he explained.

Additionally, they manage client inventory according to hospital needs on an on-going basis by assessing both peak census and slower time frames. Clients have a dedicated Customer Advocate who provides on-site inventory management, delivers and organizes clean linen and uniforms, and picks up soiled products.

A linen and laundry Customer Advocate can't perform surgery, but ImageFIRST staff can monitor and help sanitize and eliminate 99.999% of pathogens on textiles that could contribute to a negative outcome. "Our team is dedicated to their customers and to each other in delivering on our pledge to exceed client expectations," Juffre said.

"One of the notable changes post pandemic is that hospitals have begun to contact us, so we can support their linen needs within the four walls of the hospital to help them deliver inpatient care," he said, "prompting us to double-down on standard operating procedures."

For example, ImageFIRST has increased their management of safety and hygiene best practice programs, including cubicle curtain laundering schedules. They are also professionally monitoring scrub programs, restocked on-site with UHF-RFID chip technology to track inventory and account for who, when, and for how long scrubs, mops, towels and linens are in use. Customer Advocates can also more efficiently handle and monitor needs through the innovative ScrubVAULT® System, which utilizes chip technology for enhanced trackability.

Sanitized scrubs and lab coats are always on hand-with a quick QR access code- and customers can get automated tracking for accurate reporting, thanks to the RFID chips in scrubs, curtains, microfiber and other products.

### **Quality Brand Yields Customer Loyalty**

ImageFIRST specializes in the healthcare industry, giving them a unique understanding of their clients' requirements, needs, and challenges. Because they recognize how patients, visitors, and staff experience each aspect of a medical facility, their programs are designed to solve common challenges, such as attrition and product loss, fluctuating patient census, managing multiple contacts, and more.

"In fact, during the COVID crisis we increased our associate head count by approximately 25%; expanded our footprint, acquiring several other companies and processing facilities nationwide; and accelerated our manufacturing of new products to combat supply chain delays," Juffre summarized.

In marketing terms, the ImageFIRST brand represents quality products and services which, in turn, is rewarded with a year-after-year earned customer loyalty of 97.5% retention level. Their performance excellence is achieved as a result of an increased focus on improving the human experience within the customers' facilities – from the patients, to staff, and visitors.

In addition to keeping abreast of state-of-the-art technology and operations, he credits the importance of ImageFIRST culture for brand loyalty.

"We made our plants safe; we ensure our associates are not only safe but also feel safe, so they come to work in spite of weather, environmental or other outside influences because they recognize the individual value they add to our customers," he explained.

"Our culture was tested during the past two years ... and we passed," Juffre said.

### **More Than a Vendor ... A Partner**

Finally, Juffre tips his hat to the forward thinking of ImageFIRST even in the midst of the crisis. "We looked beyond the immediate crisis and set up nimble staffing and inventory procedures to accommodate the next stage of when we predicted that providers would experience a tidal wave of delayed, yet vital, elective procedures to schedule for their patients. We anticipated a future of high demand for continuing worry-free assurance of quality linens and staff and patient apparel delivery, with the ultimate focus being in maintaining safety and cleaning procedures supporting recovery," Juffre asserted.

When safety measures allowed, clients started to experience new demands to not only schedule expanded capacity for increased census, but also to attract and persuade the public that cleanliness, safety, and comfort awaited them for their hospital experience.

"We are here to double-down on a course of action to partner with our clients in planning and implementation of operations which enhances the human experience in their practices, heightens patient and staff satisfaction and supports positive patient outcomes," Juffre concluded.

*For more information, visit [www.ImageFIRST.com](http://www.ImageFIRST.com) or call (800) 368-3676.*

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