

Commercial Cleaning Proof-of-Service SaaS

Killgate Research Validation Report

Locked price: \$129/month for up to 25 active customer locations

VERDICT

RESEARCH_PASS — 0.78 confidence

Worth direct buyer validation. Not GO and not permission to build yet.

Core conclusion. The pain and budget are real, and \$129 is competitively interesting, but nearly every individual feature is already available in established janitorial software. The thesis therefore depends on whether a simpler, narrower, lower-cost proof-of-service workflow is sufficient to make 10–75 employee operators buy or switch.

Locked hypothesis — KG-2026-08-28-CCQA-01

Buyer: Independent commercial cleaning companies with approximately 10–75 employees, primarily recurring B2B accounts such as offices, medical practices, and retail locations.

Buyer role — provisional: Owner, operations manager, or general manager responsible for client retention and field quality.

Problem: The buyer cannot reliably see what overnight/mobile crews actually completed. Missed work and ambiguous client complaints create rework, supervisory burden, accountability problems, disputes, and potentially lost recurring contracts.

Offer: Location-specific employee checklists; QR/NFC area verification; required photos on selected high-risk tasks; exception/problem reporting; supervisor visibility; and a client-facing service record showing completion, timing, exceptions, and required photographs.

Locked price: \$129/month/company for up to 25 active customer locations.

Current alternatives: Paper/checklists, texts and photos, supervisor inspections, spreadsheets, plus vertical products such as Swept, Clean Smarts, Janitorial Manager, and OrangeQC.

Contract rule: Material changes to buyer, problem, product thesis, or \$129 price require a new contract ID.

Gate scoreboard

Gate	Result	Evidence
Contract locked before scoring	PASS	KG-2026-08-28-CCQA-01
≥3 useful DIRECT public sources	PASS	Multiple operator, review, pricing and product sources
≥2 independent source groups	PASS	Operator forum + software reviewers; vendor evidence separated from demand evidence
Target-customer pain	PASS	Quality complaints, lost accounts, uncertainty over small misses

Gate	Result	Evidence
Current workaround/alternative	PASS	Photos, task lists, inspections, commercial janitorial software
Budget/spend proxy	PASS	Current products sell into this workflow at roughly \$125–\$500+ monthly depending on plan
Negative evidence actively sought	PASS	Strong feature parity, scope mismatch, pricing/client causes, app-adoption problems
≥2 supporting claims	PASS	Pain exists; category already receives software spend
≥2 constraints/disconfirmers	PASS	Commodity functionality; proof does not solve every cancellation
Fatal technical/legal constraint	PASS	None found; healthcare photography needs controls
8 qualified buyers	NOT YET TESTED	0/8
≥30% strong pain	NOT YET TESTED	No direct interviews
≥4 price-positive at \$129	NOT YET TESTED	0/4
≥2 verified payments	NOT YET TESTED	0/2

Evidence-independence rule. Competitor websites establish capabilities and prices; they do not count as independent evidence that customers have the pain.

Mechanism scoreboard

Mechanism	Role	Status	Assessment
Site-specific task checklist	CORE_INPUT	COMMODITY	Established implementation
QR/NFC proof that worker reached an area	CORE_INPUT	COMMODITY	Janitorial Manager and Clean Smarts already support this
Required live photographic evidence	CORE_INPUT	SUPPORTED / COMMODITY	Technically established; Clean Smarts prevents old-gallery photos for required live proof
Exception/problem reporting	SUPPORTING	BUNDLED	Common in existing platforms

Mechanism	Role	Status	Assessment
Supervisor visibility into remote crews	CORE_VALUE	SUPPORTED	Repeatedly valued by operators/software users
Client-facing proof-of-service record	CORE_VALUE	SUPPORTED / COMMODITY	Existing products already sell reports/portals around this job
Preventing “you didn’t do it” disputes	CORE_VALUE	PLAUSIBLE	Evidence supports documentation value, but not universal dispute prevention
Preventing quality-related cancellation	CORE_VALUE	TEST	Cancellation often has causes documentation cannot solve
Narrower/easier product at \$129	CORE_VALUE	TEST	Most credible differentiation remaining

Feasibility: No FEASIBILITY_REQUIRED flag. None of the core technology is speculative; several incumbents already implement essentially every technical component.

Strongest evidence FOR

1. The underlying operational pain is real — including actual contract loss

A commercial-cleaning operator with about 60 recurring accounts reported losing four office/industrial customers and described small quality complaints, difficulty attributing misses to cleaners versus subsequent building use, and limited ability to inspect frequently. This directly aligns with distributed recurring sites, employee accountability, quality disputes, and customer-retention risk.

Source:

https://www.reddit.com/r/cleaningbusiness/comments/1usw552/lost_four_clients_in_the_past_two_weeksall/

2. Operators already use the proposed manual workaround

That same operator said cleaners already take photos of task-list items, while management performs inspections and client check-ins. An existing workaround is stronger evidence than someone merely saying the concept sounds useful: the job already consumes operational effort.

Source:

https://www.reddit.com/r/cleaningbusiness/comments/1usw552/lost_four_clients_in_the_past_two_weeksall/

3. Companies in the target size band already pay for software addressing this job

Verified/reviewed Swept users include facilities-services operators in the 11–50 employee range and larger companies. Users cite inspections, checklists, communication, employee location/time visibility, and client communication as useful functionality. Some reviews are incentivized or vendor-referred, so this is treated as observed usage rather than pristine independent demand evidence.

Source: <https://www.capterra.com/p/148615/Swept/reviews/>

4. \$129 is credible as a category price

Current alternatives establish real software budgets. Swept Optimize starts at \$150/month and Scale at \$225/month. Clean Smarts Foundation is \$125/month for the first 10 users and Expert is \$200/month. OrangeQC Starter is \$250/month, while its Service Validation add-on is another \$250/month. The locked \$129 price is therefore not obviously above the category willingness-to-spend envelope.

Source: <https://sweptworks.com/compare-plans>

Additional pricing sources: [Clean Smarts pricing](#) | [OrangeQC pricing](#)

Strongest evidence AGAINST

1. The product is extremely close to existing products

Janitorial Manager already offers QR codes and NFC tags, location-specific inspections, proof-of-service reports, image capture, and historical records. Clean Smarts provides site-specific checklists, required live photos, and barcode/NFC area workflows. OrangeQC sells QR-based service validation, visit tracking, checklists, and service logs. Swept markets inspections, checklists, timestamped photos, and client reporting. Feature novelty is effectively zero. This does not kill the contract, but differentiation must come from simplicity, adoption, pricing, or execution — not the existence of the features.

Sources: [Janitorial Manager](#) | [Clean Smarts checklist documentation](#) | [OrangeQC pricing](#) | [Swept inspection software](#)

2. Proof of service does not necessarily prevent account loss

The strongest operator evidence also falsifies an overly simple causal claim. The operator who lost four accounts already had cleaners taking photos, a task list, inspections, and client check-ins. The deeper problem appeared partly to be scope/frequency mismatch: customers wanted near-deep-clean outcomes while rejecting increased cleaning frequency or expanded service. Documentation may help with disputed facts; it cannot make an under-scoped contract produce the customer's desired outcome.

Sources: [Operator thread](#)

3. Frontline usability is a serious constraint

A workflow used every night cannot tolerate much friction. Existing Swept users report crashes, slow performance, GPS/geofence issues, and occasional picture-upload problems; one facilities-services president described it as costly for what he received. This creates both an opportunity and a warning: “simpler” only matters if employee compliance is genuinely higher.

Sources: [Swept reviews](#)

4. Healthcare photography introduces a trust/privacy edge case

HHS states that ordinary janitorial companies generally are not HIPAA business associates when PHI exposure is merely incidental. But this product intentionally captures and stores photographs inside customer facilities. Medical-location deployments should therefore have explicit no-PHI/photo-zone rules, configurable photo exclusions, and appropriate data-handling controls. This is a constraint, not a fatal blocker.

Sources: [HHS HIPAA FAQ](#)

Evidence audit

Known facts

- Commercial cleaners experience recurring quality complaints and lost contracts; some already respond with photos, checklists, and inspections.
- Commercial janitorial businesses already buy specialized workforce/quality software, including products priced above \$129/month.
- QR/NFC validation, task checklists, required photos, inspection reports, and client-facing transparency are technically mature features available today.

Inferences

- A \$129 flat price may be attractive where incumbents charge by user or reserve photo/client features for higher plans.
- The strongest positioning is probably not “better janitorial management software,” but “the lowest-friction way to prove recurring commercial cleaning was actually performed.” This is an interpretation of the locked product, not a contract change.

Unknowns

- Whether 10–75 employee owners consider this problem among their top purchasing priorities.
- How many are currently paying nothing versus Swept, Clean Smarts, Janitorial Manager, or another incumbent.
- Whether client-facing proof is wanted every service or only after complaints.
- How many employee minutes the documentation workflow adds per visit.
- Whether cleaners reliably comply with scans and photos.
- Whether owners would switch software merely to save roughly \$20–\$100+ per month.
- Whether the 25-location cap aligns with the locked employee-size range.
- Customer acquisition cost, onboarding/support cost, churn, and actual willingness to pay exactly \$129.

Contradictions

- The clearest contradiction is that an operator already using task-list photos and inspections still lost four accounts.
- The other major contradiction is category maturity: several incumbents can credibly say today, “we already do this.”

Excluded / downweighted evidence

- Competitor claims such as “protect contracts,” “increase retention,” or high ROI are treated as seller marketing, not independent proof of commercial outcomes.
- Vendor-hosted testimonials are not counted as independent demand observations.
- Recent forum threads that resembled product-validation prompts or contained obvious self-promotional vendor responses were not used as primary evidence.

Why this verdict follows

RESEARCH_FAIL would be wrong. The evidence clears the mandatory public-research components: pain, existing workaround, existing software spend, multiple alternatives, disconfirming evidence, and no obvious fatal technical/legal obstacle.

RESEARCH_PIVOT would also be premature. Feature commoditization alone does not force a pivot. The locked buyer, problem, and economic proposition can still survive if \$129 plus lower complexity and high frontline compliance produces sufficient willingness-to-pay.

Therefore: RESEARCH_PASS.

Remaining uncertainty: overwhelmingly economic, not informational. More competitor research now has rapidly diminishing value.

Minimum next action

Run the unchanged offer against at least 8 unique qualified commercial-cleaning buyers matching the locked ICP. Do not build the product first. Use a clickable mockup or concise walkthrough and test the exact proposition:

\$129/month for up to 25 active commercial locations.

1. The most recent real quality complaint or “was this actually cleaned?” dispute.
2. What happened commercially: reclean, supervisor trip, credit, angry client, cancellation risk, or actual loss.
3. The current workflow: paper, texts/photos, inspections, Swept, Clean Smarts, Janitorial Manager, etc.
4. Current monthly software spend.
5. Whether cleaners would realistically scan/check/photo during every relevant shift.
6. Who controls the software budget.
7. Their reaction to the exact \$129/month price.
8. If positive, ask them to start a paid \$129 first-month pilot now — not join a waitlist.

Record the actual objection/no-priority reason from every buyer.

Required next gate before GO

- ≥ 8 unique qualified buyers.
- $\geq 30\%$ with strong pain backed by a recent concrete example.
- ≥ 4 price-positive buyers at the exact \$129 price, unless payments already satisfy the exception.
- ≥ 2 verified paid pilots/deposits, amount greater than zero with meaningful payment references.
- Objections reviewed for every interaction.

Decisive experiment: not building the NFC/photo system. It is determining whether owners who already understand the problem will put money behind a narrower \$129 alternative.

What would change the verdict

Upgrade: Four or more of the first eight qualified buyers accept \$129 without meaningful price resistance, strong pain exceeds 30%, and at least two actually pay. That puts the idea on the path toward GO.

Downgrade to PIVOT: Owners repeatedly say the pain is real but they need scheduling/payroll/timekeeping in the same system, or they refuse to replace their current incumbent for a narrow tool.

Downgrade toward KILL: After sufficient qualified testing, buyers consistently say photos/checklists are adequate today, quality disputes are infrequent or economically minor, and fewer than two buyers will make a real paid commitment at \$129.

Source links

Reddit operator thread:

[https://www.reddit.com/r/cleaningbusiness/comments/1usw552/lost four clients in the past two weeksall/](https://www.reddit.com/r/cleaningbusiness/comments/1usw552/lost_four_clients_in_the_past_two_weeksall/)

Capterra — Swept reviews: <https://www.capterra.com/p/148615/Swept/reviews/>

Swept plans: <https://sweptworks.com/compare-plans>

Swept inspection software: <https://sweptworks.com/janitorial-inspection-software>

Clean Smarts pricing: <https://www.cleansmarts.com/pricing>

Clean Smarts checklist documentation: <https://support.cleansmarts.com/how-do-i-create-a-checklist>

OrangeQC pricing: <https://www.orangeqc.com/pricing/>

Janitorial Manager inspections: <https://www.janitorialmanager.com/work-management-system/janitorial-inspections-app/>

HHS HIPAA FAQ: <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/faq/243/is-a-business-associate-contract-required-for-inadvertent-contact-with-phi/index.html>

Killgate decision semantics: RESEARCH_PASS means proceed to direct buyer validation. It does not mean GO and is not authorization to build.