

Once again I am proud to helm Midnight Janitorial's participation in the Rochester Business Ethics Award. I feel the Ethics Award process is one of the most valuable learning opportunities available. Not only is the application process educational, it also builds the foundation for an assessment tool, providing the necessary guidelines to help us further develop the ethical core that defines Midnight Janitorial.

Today I can say with immense pride that we have enjoyed tremendous success in every aspect of our operations and we attribute all of it to our authentic and long-standing commitment to business ethics. Our recent accomplishments are a snapshot of Midnight Janitorial's ongoing ethical sense of responsibility to staff, clients, and the community. Please let me share them with you.

Staff. Our staff is our greatest investment and responsibility. A properly educated and enthusiastic staff is the most productive way to provide excellent customer service. Establishing a sense of teamwork and mutual respect for others are critical for success. As such, "staff growth," means two things: increased staff size and professional development. Given we often interview approximately twenty applicants in order to find one who has the work ethic we seek, increasing our staff size is huge task. Not only did we increase our staff this year but we are in the process of translating our training manual to Spanish to accommodate the new employees who speak English as a second language.

Midnight Janitorial is always looking for new and creative methods to engage and teach our staff in a meaningful way. In addition to "leading by example," we provide books (every staff member receives a copy of Four Ways to Work with Others), classes, conferences, and discussions. Last year we asked employees what they needed for greater job satisfaction. "More input," was the overwhelming response. We answered with an incentive-based suggestions program. If a staff person offers any suggestion for change and their suggestion is used, that person will receive ten dollars. Every suggestion, used or not, is followed with an open discussion on why a particular decision was made.

Why do we do this? Certainly not for short-term financial gain. In a matter of months we've awarded over one hundred dollars to staff members through this program. Many of the implemented suggestions have included costlier products, equipment, and items for increased staff safety and comfort. The gains are measured in everything our company values—respectful relationships, quality work, and community support.

This incentive-based suggestions program shows our employees that we value their input, treat them with dignity, and care about them. Their loyalty and learned skills are reflected in the superb, personal work they do for clients. Finally, our employees are learning transferable skills they can take with them into the community. We want all our staff to leave with higher-functioning skill sets, more self-esteem, and a better quality of life than when they started at our company.

Clients. Our clients receive personal service. In order to address issues quickly and make fair decisions we created a formal client complaint form. This gives clients the opportunity to provide a detailed description of any grievances. We use this form to open

a dialogue with a client asking them what we could do to remedy the situation. We document all complaints and use them as case studies for our employee training. This way, if employees encounter a similar situation they will have the knowledge and communication skills necessary to take appropriate action.

Community. Midnight Janitorial has a proud history of community service. While educating our staff benefits the community indirectly we strive to do much more. Last year we implemented a new policy making it easier for our employees to volunteer their precious time to community organizations of their choice. We pay them full wages for up to four hours/month of volunteer time. As a result, our number of employee community service hours has more than doubled!

Responsibility to the community includes the business community. From its inception, Midnight Janitorial set out to change business practices in the janitorial industry. This is a field where industry norms prevail—employees are disposable, women do not hold upper management positions, and products are purchased based on minimum cost with little regard to consistent quality standards. These are terrible practices for a service-based industry! Midnight Janitorial's concept of service extends beyond the traditional notion of exchanging money for labor. We provide a service to our employees, our clients, and the community. In other words: we put people before profits. Dignity, compassion, quality, and service are the important variables in our business equation. And profit? Over the past two years we have watched our profits soar by 150 percent. In comparison, standard industry growth, using standard industry practices, is 15 percent.

Business ethics and our ethical sense of responsibility to our staff, clients, and community have become our identity. It's the way we do business and it works. Speaking on behalf of our company, bring it on! We can't wait to do more.

Sincerely,

Angella Luyk, CEO
Midnight Janitorial