

PROFILES IN SUCCESS

Maid to Clean

Cinderella Bermudez

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From her name to her love of cleaning, Cinderella Bermudez was undoubtedly made to clean. After spending years as an Executive Housekeeper for Hyatt and DoubleTree hotels, Cinderella Bermudez, owner of Maid to Clean in Alexandria, Virginia, found herself in the residential cleaning industry when she leased a house and requested her key a day early to clean the house prior to moving in. The suspicious landlord showed up to check on Cindi, only to find that she was indeed cleaning the house rather than moving in early. The landlord and Cindi soon were in business together with Cindi cleaning the landlord's turnover rental properties on her days off.

Within six months, Cindi knew she'd found her calling. Starting with part-time turnover cleaning, Cindy soon expanded into residential cleaning. Over the past 10 years, Cindi has built Maid to Clean into a remarkably successful cleaning service boasting over \$1.2 million in annual sales and 35 employees.

Cindi says she loves the challenge to stay organized and to develop her staff, business, and human resource skills. "I am only as successful as my staff is motivated and excited to come to work," she says. The thing she says she dislikes the most about her business is that she must get up early in the mornings.

Cindi feels one of the greatest issues facing the residential cleaning industry is the lack of bilingual training materials and seminars. She adds, "We also need to unite and work on establishing consistent rates which will enable us to provide better salaries for our staff. This is still an industry that is not regarded as worthy of paying cleaning staff over \$15 per hour."

When asked to give advice to start-up cleaning services, Cindi quickly says, "Don't borrow money. Conduct every single aspect of the business yourself and as time progresses, hire other people to do those tasks, but only after you know what the job entails. This helps in understanding every aspect of your business and allows you to keep tabs on what is going on. Also make do with what you have. This helps with learning how to work efficiently and control costs. Select employees that you can trust 100%."

When selecting employees, Cindi looks for an honest and sincere smile. "Sincerity, honesty, and hard work go hand-in-hand. Someone who can smile has a great disposition. That disposition comes along with willingness and flexibility. The potential to develop an employee with a good disposition is limitless. Provide employees with respect and encourage them to expand their potential – and that is what an employer can expect in return."

Cindi believes the thing that makes her service stand out above the others is her intense dedication to employee empowerment. According to Cindi, the Maid to Clean secret to keeping customers loyal is, "We care. We listen. We communicate. Our responsiveness is great. We anticipate situations. Our staff works as a team and we all understand that no one, not even I, the owner, has any more or less responsibility or power as a team member to ensure that we are

providing exceptional service and cleaning. We focus on consistency in our cleaning and cleaning staff, so that the client always knows what and whom to expect.”

Cindi has been an active member of ARCSI since early 2004. She said she feels that ARCSI brings service companies together. “Cleaning businesses need to work with one another to better serve our customers and our employees. Two issues that I think need to be addressed are affordable health care and lack of bilingual seminars. These change can occur if we are united as an industry,” she explains.

In 2005, Maid to Clean was selected as the #1 cleaning service in the Washington, D.C. metro-area because of the company’s high standards to providing detailed, reliable and trustworthy service. As a result of this recognition, Maid to Clean has increased its market share in the area, and recently added new teams to meet the large increase in demand. Cindi says, “This is definitely an exciting time for Maid to Clean!”

With her complete dedication to her business, her employees, and her customers, Cinderella Bermudez and Maid to Clean are destined to continue skyrocketing into a new sphere of success in the residential cleaning industry.