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Cleaner and Greener

United Building Maintenance, Inc
President - Helen Sigsby

Success Magazine: Helen, how do you define success?

Helen Sigsby: I have found success to be personal fulfillment in life—living a balanced life.

SM: You started United Building Maintenance, Inc. in 1998. What prompted your decision to start this business?

HS: I thought it was going to be easy to start and grow my own business. I was wrong about that, but it has been a journey and a wonderful life experience, and I am very grateful for that.

SM: What has been your secret for successful growth over the past decade?

HS: We started out very slowly and steadily grew over time.

SM: What types of cleaning services do you offer?

HS: We are a Green Clean Institute Certified™ firm and we are certified green consultants. Our services

provide environmentally responsible and sustainable green commercial cleaning, commercial and residential carpet care, floor care, upholstery cleaning, and tile and grout cleaning delivered in the fastest, least intrusive, most user-friendly manner you will ever experience.

SM: You focus heavily on businesses and corporate buildings. Do you do residential projects as well?

HS: For the first eight years, we worked mainly on commercial office buildings.

For the past two years, we have expanded our focus to include the residential market on some of our services like carpet care, floor care, upholstery, and tile and grout cleaning and sealing (United Carpet and Floor Care).

As of July 2009, we will offer more specialized services for the homeowner. We believe it is what our customers are looking for and we aim to please. Be sure to check our website for updates to our services at www.carpet-cleaningalbany.com.

SM: Has your focus always been on “green cleaning?” How has the recent environmental shift affected your business?

HS: No, our focus wasn't always on environmentally friendly products and services. A few years ago people didn't know what “green” meant. But today, most people understand the importance of sustaining our environment. We now know that what we do in our daily lives will affect others for years to come. It is about accountability.

If there might be a better way to do something should we try it?

If recycling can help our environment, should we do it?

If we could use organic products instead of harmful chemicals should we?

My answer is YES.

There are many small things we can do to help. When we are part of the solution, rather than the problem, it makes us feel good. It is so important to contribute in a positive way. The green movement has been great for our business.

SM: Beyond the obvious benefits to the environment, how can green products contribute to an overall healthier lifestyle?

HS: Green means caring, it means being accountable, it is being aware of ourselves and our surroundings. Green means that the earth belongs to all of us, and we all must take care of it. Green is a movement toward a healthier lifestyle because it requires thinking about things differently and making better choices. Be good to yourself first and you will see things change around you.

SM: What makes you truly unique in the industry?

HS: We have differentiated ourselves through our education and training, our experience, the use of repetition, the systems that we have implemented, and our guarantee.

SM: What did you do prior to starting UBMI?

HS: I went to school for electrical engineering.

SM: You must feel very proud at the end of the day knowing you are contributing in a positive way. In what other ways do you feel your position is rewarding?

HS: I am very grateful to be able to do what I do. The most rewarding aspect is that this experience has allowed me to better myself personally and professionally, enabling me to help others in a more effective way.

SM: How do you promote yourself? Do you rely heavily on word-of-mouth advertising?

HS: Yes, I think word-of-mouth is a great way to advertise. But we also have a website, and do some target advertisements.

SM: How is the recession affecting your business? What have you done to position yourself for success during these uncertain times?

HS: I believe people want to deal with companies they can trust and who maintain excellent job performance. We fit into that category. We keep growing. The recession has not affected our business.



SM: Do you contract the work out, or do you employ a staff?

HS: We have our own employees.

SM: What are the benefits to this?

HS: We like our employees to know our mission and represent our company the way we want them to. We



want to provide our customers with the best possible experience.

SM: How do you ensure consistency of your service?

HS: My belief is that our employees are as important as our clients—they are the ones who are out there representing our company. I believe in making them feel they are part of the company—letting them know they are appreciated and important. We have a system and we work very hard to keep up with it. In this way, we can guarantee our services. If someone is unhappy, we will go back as soon as possible and rectify the situation.

SM: What is the most important thing you have learned about yourself in the process of starting your own business?

HS: All things are possible. If you make a commitment to yourself and never give up, you will create your dream.

SM: What advice would you give to someone just starting out in business?

HS: Know what you want, and how you want to achieve it. Know the only reason your business exists is because of your personal goals. Plan it, and then just do it.

SM: Is it difficult to find balance in your life? How do you spend your free time?

HS: In the beginning it was difficult. I eventually learned self discipline, how to manage my time better, and how to focus on what's really important in life. I enjoy spending my free time with family and reading books.

SM: What inspires you?

HS: My God is my inspiration—faith and hope is the driving force.

When we see positivity all around us, we know life is good.



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